

Commentary

THE GHOST OF SOCIAL FASCISM

by Theodore Draper



A Writer Between Generations *David T. Bazelon*

The Jewish Community & the Jewish Condition *Robert Alter*

Beyond New Leftism *Steven Kelman*

The Big Money *John Thompson*

Faith in Israel *Harold Fisch*

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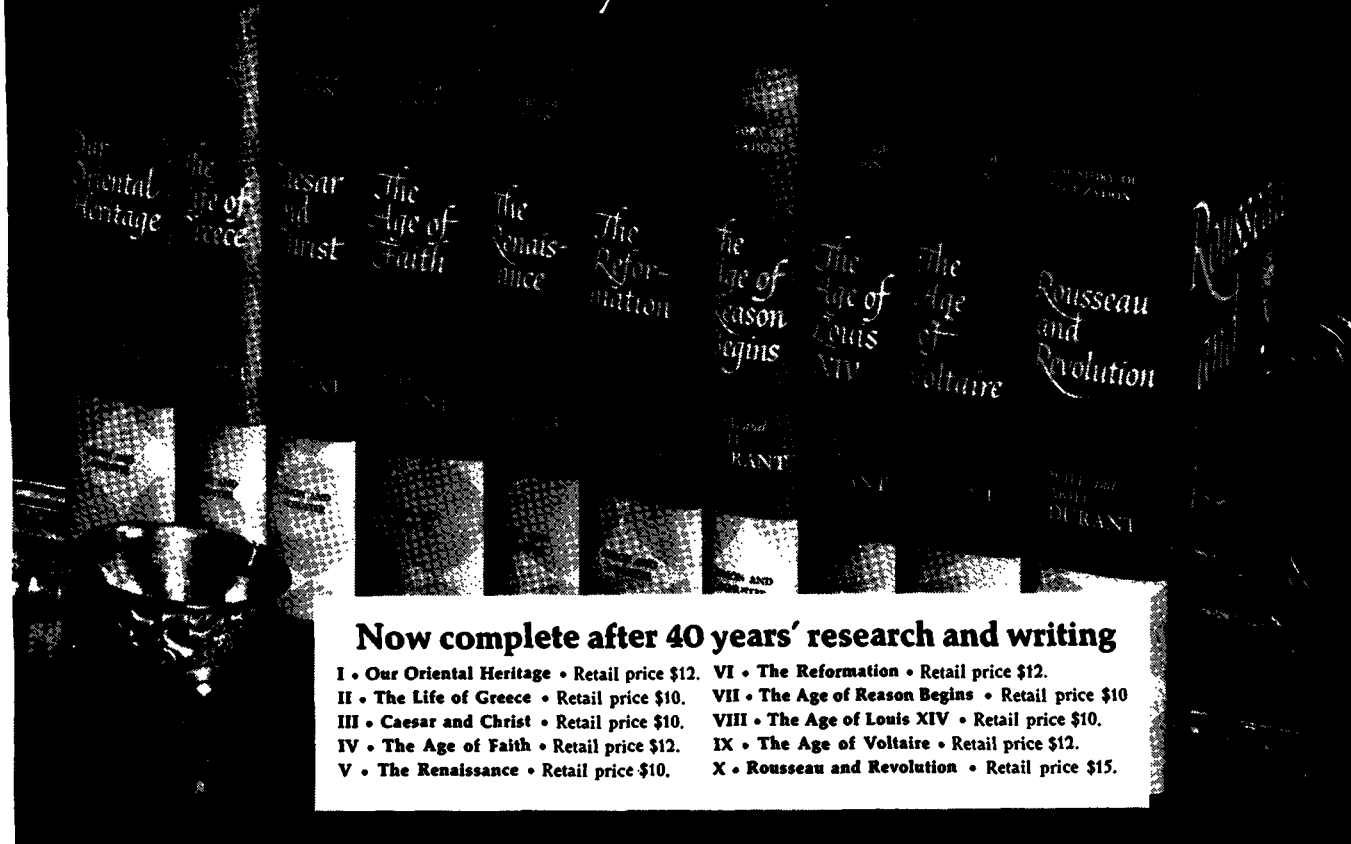


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Commentary

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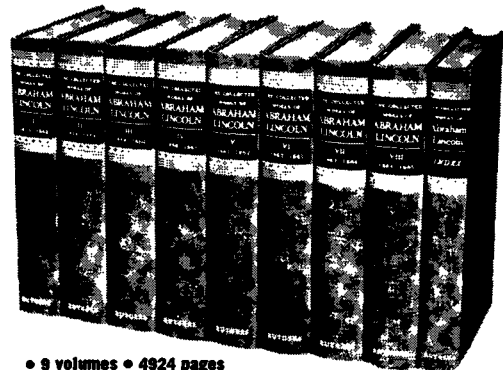
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Letters from Readers

The Moral Imagination

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY: Jervis Anderson's fine essay, "Race, Rage & Eldridge Cleaver" [December 1968], is itself a wonderful illustration of how the moral imagination which he calls for in American writing can act as a liberating force. For Mr. Anderson is able to imagine at least one thing which such race-thinkers as Richard Gilman of the *New Republic* (whom he justly rebukes) have almost induced us to deny: the existence of individuals, among Negroes as well as among whites. We have for so long now been drugged by the potent mixture of race, culture, and politics peddled to us by the moral desperadoes of the *New Republic* and the *New York Review* that we are awakened as if from a dream when Mr. Anderson tells us that Eldridge Cleaver, though a talented writer, "is lacking in certain fundamental moral qualities." I cannot recall when I last felt so refreshed, and even liberated, by the simple statement of truth.

EDWARD ALEXANDER

Department of English
University of Washington
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Civil Disobedience

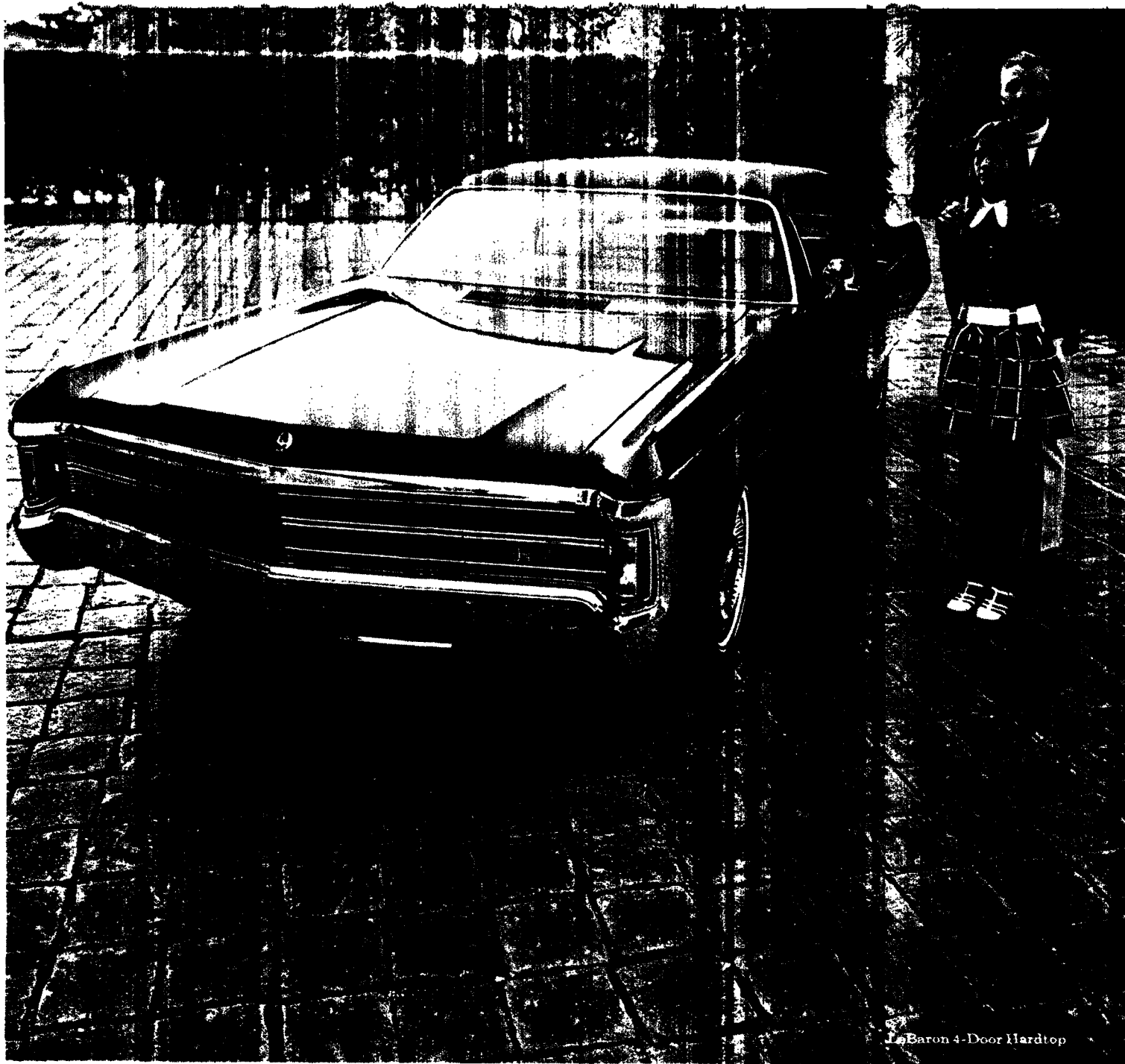
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY: "Vietnam and the Law" by Beverly Woodward [November 1968] quite properly makes a case for deliberate violation of the law in our society for the purpose of achieving reform. But the author's ingenious construction of the new category "civil challenge," which she distinguishes from civil disobedience, is wholly artificial and unnecessarily confusing, resting as it does on a misconception of what civil disobedience is.

Miss Woodward evidently believes that civil disobedience entails the passive acceptance of consequences for law violation, that it is impermissible for the civil disobedient to raise technical defenses, and to use the legal system to his advantage—perhaps to his eventual acquittal. Acceptance of the consequences is certainly a philosophical tenet of civil disobedience but there is no reason to believe that establishing a defense is inconsis-

tent with the disobedient's ultimate willingness to be punished. In fact, the civil disobedience is more effective if there is a lengthy legal proceeding during which the issue is ventilated and, hopefully, the sympathy of the public is enlisted. Reforming zeal rather than personal martyrdom is the animating force of civil disobedience.

Secondly, Miss Woodward asserts that civil disobedience seeks change through legislative or executive action, while civil challenge seeks change via the judiciary. What the basis for this division is, since the result of civil disobedience is arrest and trial, I cannot fathom. Moreover we are told that civil disobedience appeals to moral laws while civil challenge appeals to "the highest laws of the polity." Many civil disobedients have based their disobedience on the belief that the law they violated was inconsistent with "the highest laws of the polity," as did the sit-in demonstrators. Anyone who protests may eventually invoke morals or natural law, but it is unfair to portray civil disobedience as a quixotic quest while civil challenge is a hard-nosed, practical tactic.

Fundamentally, Miss Woodward is in confusion about what law is. She seems to find meekness in civil disobedience, since its practitioners "recognize" the validity of the law, while civil challenge is directed only at law "without legal validity." But Miss Woodward herself admits that it is the courts which must pass on the validity of laws, and this can happen only after disobedience has taken place. Therefore it is mistaken to maintain that civil disobedients by their protest recognize the validity of the law. . . . And since any legal system requires that enacted law be presumed valid so that the system can operate, one can usually talk only about laws that *seem* out of tune with our national philosophy and purpose, not laws that are clearly without legal validity. That is why the laws violated by the sit-in demonstrators were examples of true civil disobedience. Although these laws appeared inconsistent with the broad liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, we know that the Supreme Court has only slowly made the Bill of Rights binding upon the states. Therefore the



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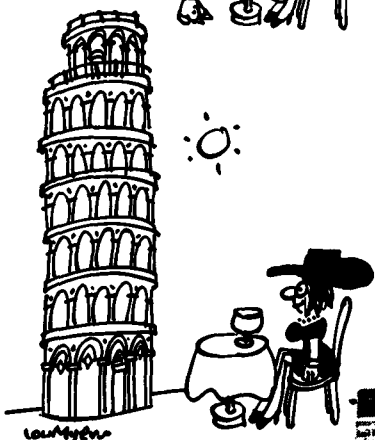
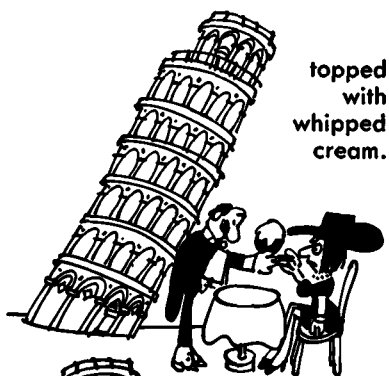
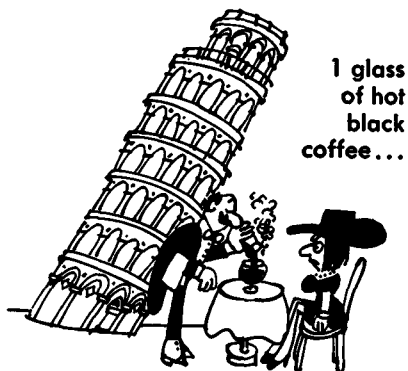
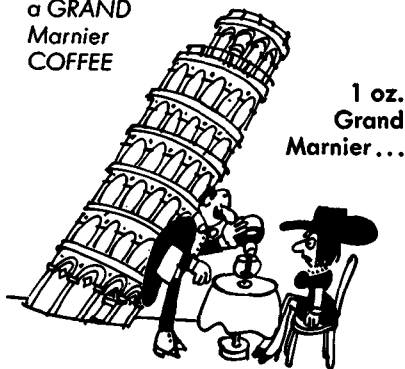
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laws violated were, at the moment of the violation, the products of duly constituted (though I recognize that their representative nature is open to question) governments and thus presumably valid. It took the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and not a Supreme Court order to consolidate the progress made through the sit-ins.

Miss Woodward's appeal to the courts to work change is largely visionary, as she must know from her study of American history. Courts, although there has been a loosening, are not adventitious legislatures no matter what we may think of the beneficent results of enlightened judicial thinking. I am at a loss to understand how the Supreme Court could bring about, as Miss Woodward suggests, a radically new understanding of the fundamental law (undefined by her) without destroying its authority in the process. Law is the great mediating force between the opposing eddies of past orthodoxies and present felt necessities, and neither society nor law would be served by wholesale rewriting of the U.S. Reports. Such a project might be Orwellian rather than Hitlerian, but it is not how we achieve progress.

In the nature of our governmental scheme the courts serve as stabilizers, not policy makers. Few today would deny that the courts, and especially the Supreme Court, make policy and work change, but we must remember that if the change is to be accepted in the country it must be interstitial, not fundamental. Moreover, the fundamental law does not, as Miss Woodward implies, need reinterpretation. The broad charters of rights and liberties are there, coupled with a conception of higher or natural law placing limits on the authority of the state which far antedates American history. What is needed, and here the courts should play a major role, is that our statutory and decisional law be brought into closer congruence with this higher law.

As a lawyer who has spent considerable time trying to mark out the uses of civil disobedience in our society... I find Miss Woodward's article too heavy on abstractions and too light on getting down to cases. Devising new categories may be a beguiling intellectual game, but it does not help our society work itself pure.

NICHOLAS W. PUNER
Ossining, New York

Miss WOODWARD writes:

I do not want to quibble over names. But sometimes what something is called *does* make a difference (as any man who has been convicted of manslaughter instead of murder would be quick to acknowledge). One devises new categories in order to point to distinctions which exist, but which are not reflected in our language. But that is not enough. The distinction must seem for some reason important and deserving of attention.

In the case at hand the distinction (between civil disobedience and civil challenge) seems to me important for several reasons.

1) We live in a period of widespread apprehension and anxiety concerning what is viewed as the breakdown of "law and order." Public figures ranging from Spiro Agnew to Justice Fortas have made negative remarks about "civil disobedience." In these circumstances I think it worthwhile to point out that many so-called cases of civil disobedience are carried out by individuals who do not consider themselves lawbreakers, but rather law *upholders*. To call their actions "disobedient" not only seems a considerable misnomer, but in itself may contribute to the public fears which feed and encourage repression.

2) Although Mr. Puner does not himself believe that civil disobedience entails "passive acceptance of [the] consequences," there are many individuals who do believe this. And at the time of the trial of the Boston Five there was a great deal of criticism of the defendants (some of it quite harsh) for having chosen to fight the charges brought against them. (Some of the defendants have indicated to me that at the beginning it was not so clear even to them that resistance in the courts was a perfectly proper course of action.) Now if actions such as those of the Boston Five are to have a positive impact on the public, it is necessary that the public view those actions as honorable and justifiable. Therefore I thought it important to point out that actions such as theirs are part of a respected tradition in this country and that such actions are indispensable if the words of the Constitution are to be brought to bear on the problems of the times.

3) I believe it would be by far preferable if the constitutionality of certain statutes or government-

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tal actions could be tested without incurring the risk of a jail sentence or fine. The recognition of the right to such risk-free challenges would, I think, have many beneficial practical effects. But, as I explain in my article, I do not advocate the right to risk-free civil disobedience (i.e., I do not see an acceptable way to eliminate the risk in those cases where the validity of a law or an official action is *not* being put in question). Therefore, I must have some way to distinguish between these two sorts of action. I could perhaps call them "civil disobedience 1" and "civil disobedience 2." However, not only do I find this terminology misleading (for reasons indicated above), but it seems to me hardly the sort of nomenclature that will stick in anyone's mind.

In addition, although I do not wish to rest my case on an appeal to authority, I would like to point out that not everyone defines civil disobedience as does Mr. Puner. For example, I referred in my article to an essay by Richard Wasserstrom (a law professor and former Department of Justice attorney in Selma, Alabama). In that essay he states: "If an act is performed under a claim of ultimately legal, that is, constitutional, right, it is simply not an act of civil disobedience, although it may be a protest against a serious wrong and may be conducted in a fashion otherwise identical to that of an act of civil disobedience." And Judge Charles E. Wyzanski makes a similar point in an article in the February 1968 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. So the idea is not entirely my own. All I did was to devise a name for this kind of action and then try to explore some of the ramifications of the concept.

One of the principal reasons Mr. Puner is perturbed by my article, I believe, is that he thinks I have characterized civil disobedients as meek and mild, whereas he has known and defended many individuals who thought they were engaged in civil disobedience and yet who were not meek and mild. He seems to believe that I have maligned his clients. Yet this conclusion is based on several misunderstandings. A careful reading of the beginning of my article should make it clear that I by no means believe the civil disobedient is necessarily characterized by meekness. (I never use the word.) I do say that *some* civil disobedients are

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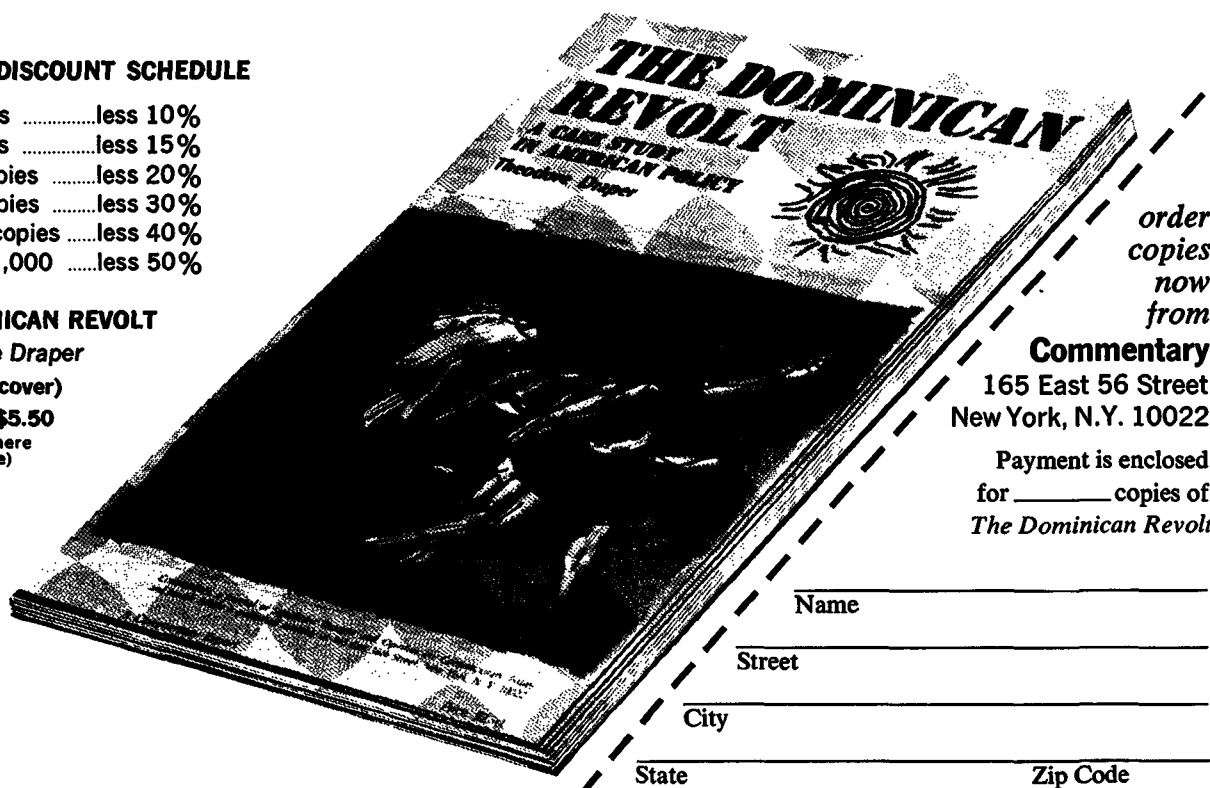
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apolitical, but that is another matter. Moreover, I nowhere say that civil challenge is necessarily more effective than civil disobedience. It depends on the circumstances. (See the final paragraph of Section I of my article.) Where the law involved seems quite clearly to be constitutional, civil challenge would in fact be a misdirected approach, I think. Also, I explicitly state that many cases of what I call civil challenge have been called civil disobedience in the past. Mr. Puner has evidently been closely involved with a number of cases of this sort. I cannot, of course, impose my terminology. Mr. Puner is free to go on considering those cases to be instances of civil disobedience. But since I choose to define civil disobedience differently (for reasons that I try to make clear), he can only misunderstand me if he applies what I say about civil disobedience to cases I would put in a different category.

By "fundamental law" I meant the Constitution plus the body of law known as "constitutional law." This is a body of law which is constantly evolving and changing. The Constitution is a document which is constantly being interpreted. It is not a document which automatically applies itself. I grant that any radically new interpretation of the Constitution does put the authority of the Court in question. But I also think that "stabilizing" efforts can backfire. As in the case of the man who has stood on one foot for too long, sometimes the only way to achieve stability is through change.

Whether the Constitution as it stands is "enough" was not the topic of my article. I was discussing there the possibilities of bringing about important change in policy given the document that we have. There are some who believe that important rights are not included in the Constitution, e.g., the right to selective conscientious objection, the right to employment at a decent wage. But, as I say, that's another topic.

Finally, it is important to note that I do not distinguish civil challenge from civil disobedience on the basis of whether the law involved is or is not *in fact* a valid law. (Here I differ with Judge Wyzanski.) Rather, I distinguish the two kinds of action in terms of the *claims made* by the individuals involved. There are cases where a law (or "law") is trans-

gressed on the grounds that it is no law and with the intention of creating a test case, and there are cases where the law (or "law") is transgressed on the grounds that it is immoral or unjust, but *not* on the grounds that it is invalid. Obviously, as Mr. Puner points out, both cases may result in arrest and trial. But in cases of civil disobedience, the appeal is to the general public to get the law changed, not to the judge (or judges) to declare the law without validity. I simply wanted to show that if we want to understand these two kinds of action and respond appropriately, then we must understand the different kinds of claims that are being made.

As for not getting down to cases—I think Mr. Puner would like me to have written a different article than the one I set out to write. There is no answer to that.

Kol Nidre

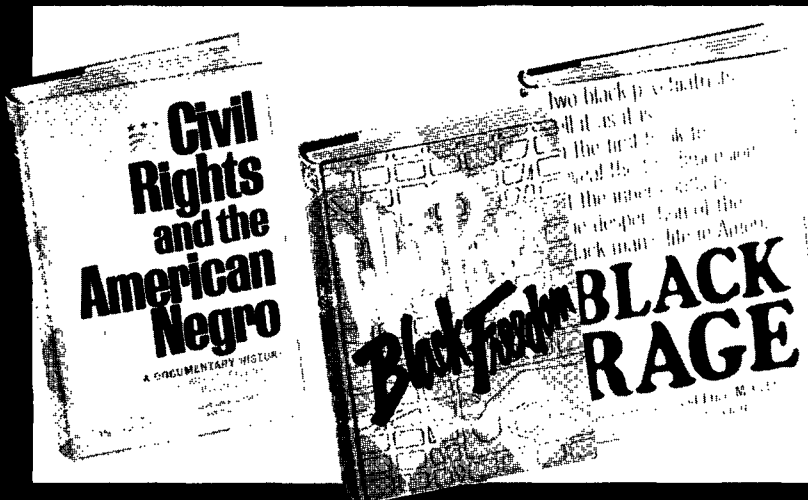
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Rabbi Kieval's article "The Curious Case of Kol Nidre" [October 1968] does much to explain this inconsistent formula. His quotation from Chief Rabbi Hertz is to the effect that the Jewish tradition is against cheating and in favor of honesty. . . . But the question is not what the Jewish tradition says, but what Kol Nidre says. It seems to say something entirely different, which is why it continues to distress us so.

I think the difficulty persists because we do not remember that the promise (or vow, renunciation, anathema, oath) originally had a dual content. First, "I swear to God" or substitute wordings having the same weight. Second, "to do such and such." In breaking a promise an individual performed two acts which made him culpable. He swore falsely, that is, took God's name in vain, which is an act requiring punishment. Secondly, he failed to perform the *mitzvah* of honesty. "Whosoever has in his possession money belonging to his companion . . . but denies liability when the other demands the money from him, transgresses a negative commandment" (Maimonides, Mishneh-Torah, Book of Asseverations). There is no release from the performance of *mitzvot*. . . . Even Kol Nidre . . . cannot change the obligation to perform the substance of a vow. What Kol Nidre does, and the only thing it

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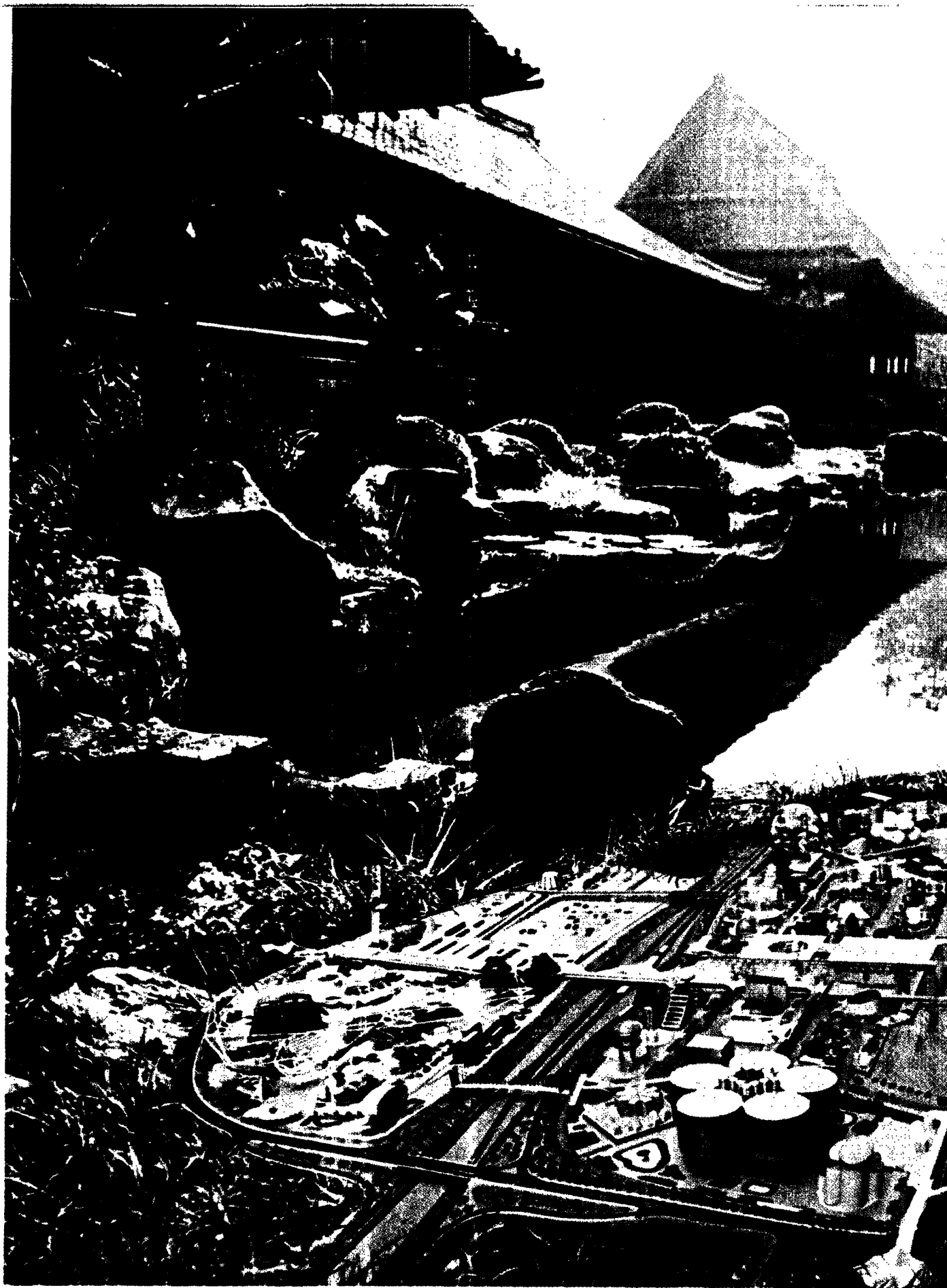
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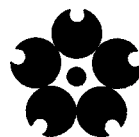
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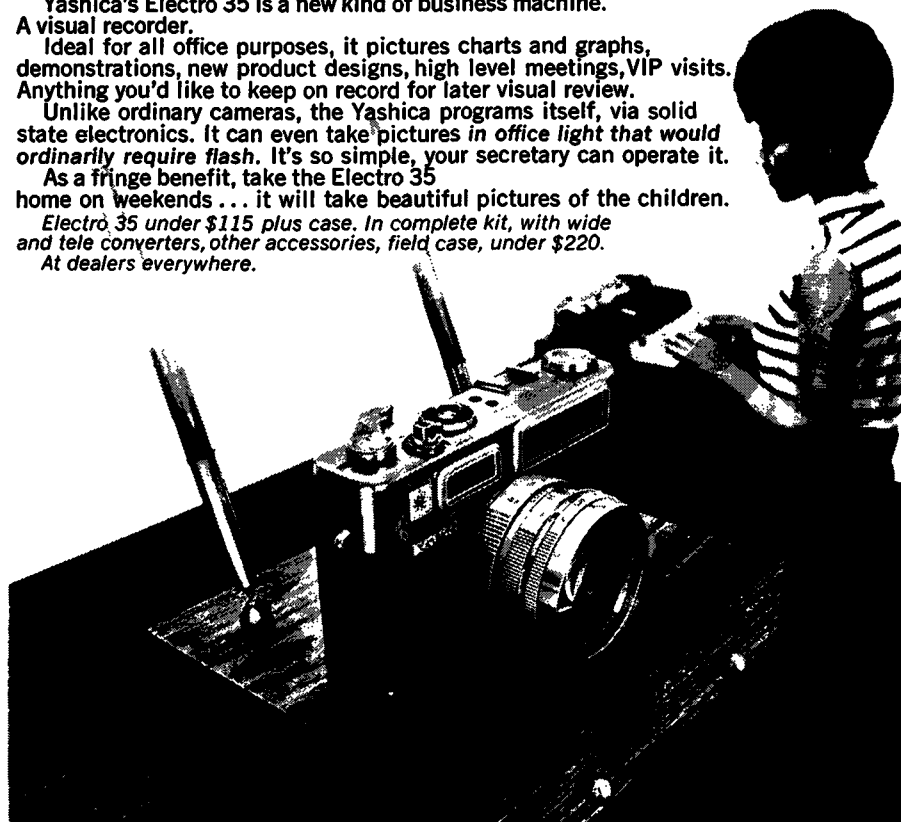
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14 / COMMENTARY FEBRUARY 1969

does, is ask forgiveness for taking God's name in vain.

The writer of Kol Nidre understood the dual nature of a promise. He limited his text to the "I swear to God" part, excluding altogether the substantive requirement. Why he restricted himself thus, I don't know . . . [but] it has caused enormous difficulty.

DAVID GELBART
Great Neck, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In an otherwise interesting article, Herman Kieval errs in his footnote on *Kol Nidre* by Arnold Schoenberg. The fact is that Schoenberg's composition is clearly based on the traditional *nussah* for the Kol Nidre prayer. This is obvious in the use of the chant motifs, in the full statements of its principal melodic line, and in the harmonic scheme. The composition begins with the traditional opening motif, slightly embellished, and expands on this motif in Schoenberg's typical idiom. In the body of the composition the traditional theme is set literally, with an accompaniment of contrapuntal lines which contrast with its *legato* style.

The piece is not dodecaphonic. It is, in fact, strongly oriented to tonality, but it does make use of the composer's innovative techniques, and depends for its development on many twelve-tone devices. However, to the listener acquainted with basic principles of contemporary composition, or even to earlier multilinear music, the use of the traditional Kol Nidre theme should be immediately perceived.

The tune is surely more obvious in this piece by Schoenberg than in the Beethoven example which Rabbi Kieval mentions, the latter depending entirely upon the opening three-note Kol Nidre motif, misleadingly presented, and upon its stylistic allusion to the ghetto melancholia. Furthermore, the Schoenberg setting captures more of the vitality of the Kol Nidre spirit than does the Beethoven fragment.

DANIEL ZIFF

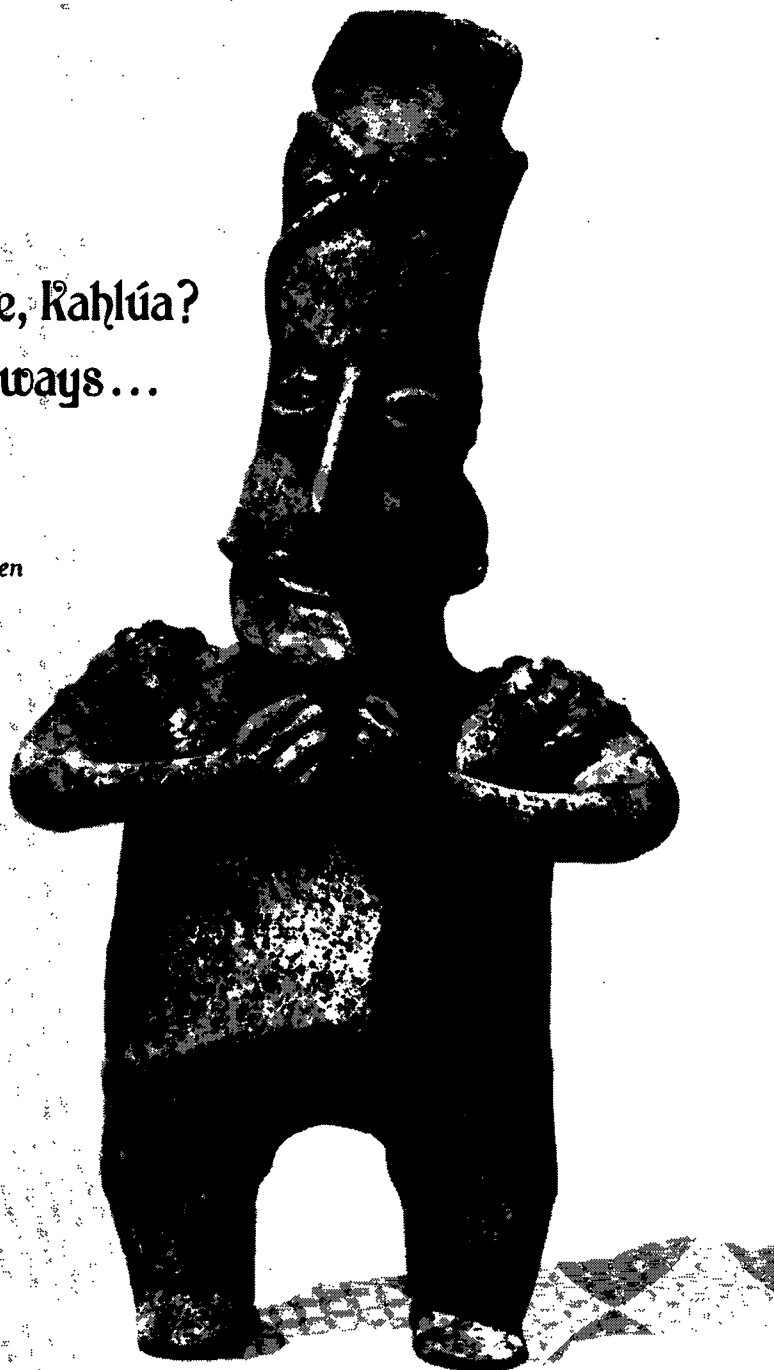
Department of Music
Yeshiva University
New York City

RABBI KIEVAL writes:

Mr. Ziff is only one of a number of readers who have properly called attention to the inaccuracy in the footnote concerning Schoen-

How do I love thee, Kahlúa?
Let me count the ways...

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I love thy taste in brownies,
in fudge and chocolate cake.
I love the way you make desserts
an extra special treat.
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chocolate I can eat.
I love thee mixed in cocktails,
I love thee poured on ice;
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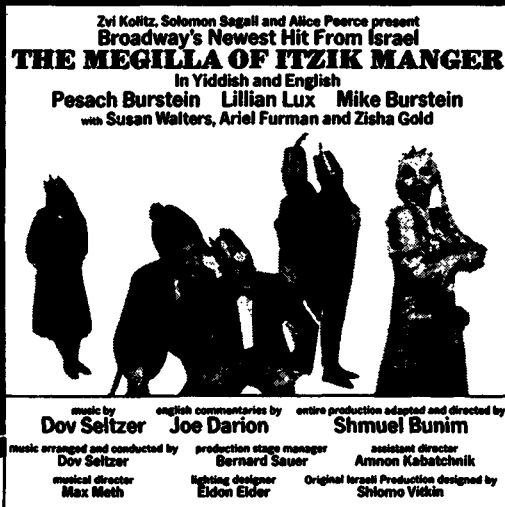
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berg's "Kol Nidre," which was appended to my article by the editors.

I may add that my colleague, Professor Albert Weisser (one of those who corrected the Schoenberg error), also observed that Bruch's "Kol Nidre" is not, strictly speaking, a concerto. While on the subject of music, I should like to mention the theory published by Dr. Johanna Spector of the Seminary Cantors Institute and College of Jewish Music (the *JWB Circle*, "Jewish Music Notes," October 1950). Dr. Spector demonstrates that our popular Kol Nidre melody derives from the cantillation of the opening passage of Genesis as sung in Babylonia 1200 years ago. In the geonic period, the Creation passage was chanted from the Torah on the Day of Atonement in the afternoon.

Mr. Gelbart's conjectures about the presumed intention of "the writer of Kol Nidre" are intriguing but improbable. The burden of my study is precisely that there was no single "writer." The inconsistencies to which he alludes result from the historical fact that the several Kol Nidre texts currently in use are the confused end-products of a series of changes and compromises which make it impossible any longer to reconstruct the original intent. For example, the text which finally won the approval of Hai Gaon was intended only as a prayer seeking divine forgiveness for the sin incurred in failing to keep a solemn promise or—quite possibly—for having taken a vow in the first place.

Puritanism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton Himmelfarb's . . . essay on "Paganism, Religion, and Modernity" [November 1968] starts with a Jew in shul on Yom Kippur . . . but before you can turn the page, Himmelfarb gets us all involved with Epicurus, Lucretius Peale, Sade, Diderot, and Jack the Ripper. Here we are in shul, about to beat our breasts with a long catalogue of sins, when he suddenly whisks us off to Tahiti and involves us with Maoris and sundry Polynesians.

After this diverting mishmash, we get back to shul, for *Ne'ilah*, I take it, and learn, thank goodness, that "Judaism isn't Calvinist," an idea Genesis got across fairly well and the Song of Songs underlined

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with purple ink. "But it is puritan," Himmelfarb proclaims. Now I don't know what kind of a shul he goes to. Reform Jews abandoned reading the 'Arayot chapter of Leviticus a century ago. We read the next chapter, the Holiness Code, XIX, with its glorification of ethics culminating in the love of our fellow man as the indispensable factor in the survival of society. On Yom Kippur morning, we read Deuteronomy XXIX and XXX, which demand that man shall "choose life" and in the afternoon Leviticus XIX, which specifies how one who chooses life goes about living it considerably, compassionately, motivated by justice and . . . righteousness. Reform Jews learn and enjoy without getting confused by Scripture readings that prohibit living with animals and sisters and aunts.

Mr. Himmelfarb should not drive away our youth even further by saying that Judaism is akin to Puritanism; rather, he should let them in on its joys. He keeps hawking the tractate 'Avodah Zarah; how about the tractate Sukkah, with its joyous "Festival of Water Drawing"? Judaism is as puritanical as Torah is mechanical.

[Rabbi] ELY E. PILCHIK
Short Hills, New Jersey

Obscenity & the Law

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of *The End of Obscenity* [November 1968] Professor Bickel says such nice things about my book that it seems uncivil to write this letter. Readers of COMMENTARY will find, at the close of the piece (if they get that far), that Professor Bickel considers *The End of Obscenity* "often witty—fun withal and instructive," and they may be moved by the accolade to read the book (something the professor seems to have done only sparingly). But those who do not read the book, and who have not otherwise studied the cases with which it deals, will come away with a badly distorted view of the law. Since obscenity and censorship currently agitate the public, civility must yield to public duty.

The errors abound, but one is central. Professor Bickel undertakes to summarize my account of the state to which the courts have moved the law. As he puts it, books "which treat openly and grossly of

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sex, but are not shockingly indecent by contemporary standards, and have some measure of social value, are now protected by the First Amendment against suppression." But this is not what I say, or what the Supreme Court says. The rule that a book, to warrant protection, must be "not shockingly indecent by contemporary standards"—in addition to having some measure of social value—is Professor Bickel's invention. . . .

The End of Obscenity does not state that where value is present a book must also avoid being "shockingly indecent." It states the opposite. Three tests of suppressible obscenity were formulated in the decade preceding the *Fanny Hill* decision: Appeal to prurient interest, patent offensiveness and—here there was a struggle—a total lack of social importance. In the cases involving *Lady Chatterley*, *Tropic of Cancer*, and *Fanny Hill*, I urged that these criteria were to be applied independently: The First Amendment protected the book unless it flunked all three tests. And literary merit, the argument ran, was a form of social importance; if a modicum of literary merit existed (a judgment to be based on the book itself, on published comment about it, and on the kind of opinion testimony familiar to the law in other fields), the First Amendment stood in the way of suppression. No matter how prurient, no matter how offensive, no matter how "shockingly indecent," the First Amendment must override the obscenity laws.

The controlling *Fanny Hill* opinion, which represents the culmination of this movement, accepted these propositions and established them as law. The core of the opinion (quoted at page 480 of the book) was this:

A book cannot be proscribed unless it is found to be *utterly without* redeeming social value. This is so even though the book is found to possess the requisite prurient appeal and to be patently offensive. Each of the three federal constitutional criteria is to be applied independently; the social value of the book can neither be weighed against nor canceled by its prurient appeal or patent offensiveness" (italics by the Court).

Most of Professor Bickel's argument flows from his mistaken description of what was contended

and what was decided. Both his critique of the law and (much less important) his critique of my position, rest upon the charge of "subjectivity," which in turn rests upon his appraisal of the words "indecent," "shocking," "social," and "value." (He puts each of them in quotation marks, inadvertently creating the impression they all come from somewhere, somewhere other than the professor's need to support his thesis.)

It is elementary jurisprudence that rules of law are not precise; the words in which the rules are cast have different meanings for different people. The valid questions are questions of degree: Is the rule, taking everything into account, too slippery? Are the words too subjective? In this instance, "social" is plain enough, and "value" is a concept the law has long employed, in contexts at least as difficult as this. "Shocking" and "indecent" are, indeed, more vulnerable to the charge of subjectivity. But those are Professor Bickel's words—not mine, not the Court's.

CHARLES REMBAR

New York City

MR. BICKEL writes:

Mr. Rembar's communication is no fair sample of his wit. And he chooses to misunderstand me. The language he quotes from my review, which I attributed to no one, attempts to identify the point the Court has reached in its obscenity decisions, without being technical about it—in my own words, you might say. The phrase "not shockingly indecent" was meant to indicate that what is called hard-core pornography still enjoys no constitutional protection. My meaning should have become entirely clear to Mr. Rembar just a couple of paragraphs later, when I attributed to him the view "that literature should be entirely free . . . but that something called hard-core pornography . . . should alone be suppressed." My argument concerning the extraordinary subjectivity of the law of obscenity is not that the judges have chosen the wrong words with which to label the results they reach; the argument is unaffected, therefore, by the words I picked to describe those results, and it stands, because its essence is that no form of words can lend objectivity to this process of judgment.

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Theater

History as Drama

Jack Richardson

THE GREAT WHITE HOPE, by Howard Sackler, is the sort of play for which all of us who battle for the theater's reputation should be grateful. It is neither a piece of slick frippery nor a dismal experiment in infantile super-theatrics; it is reasonably intelligent about a subject which can easily produce strident fits of absence of mind; it chronicles a flamboyant life that seems to have been lived so that it might now be set out upon the stage; it contains a performance by its star, James Earl Jones, that is of a high order; and, finally, it offers us a bit of history which has, in multiples of hundreds, come back to haunt all the sensible minds of our time.

However, perhaps because of the merits it did show, I sat through *The Great White Hope* in a very ungrateful mood. As I watched the scenes of the play unfold, as I saw the protagonist, Jack Jefferson, first black heavyweight champion of the world, being hounded by his white coevals as though they were out to exorcise a demon, as I watched this well-drafted decline and fall, I could not help but wish that something surprising would happen, that some force or attitude would find its way into the web of things which could not be patly deduced from the premise of a liberal consciousness mulling over our racial wounds; for if Sackler's play did not have all the complexities of the present to buttress and nourish it, *The Great White Hope* would come close to seeming little more than a tendentious national pageant in which good and evil parade in separate colors so that moral lessons can be easily taught.

An example of what I mean can be taken from the way Sackler treats history. In his play, Jefferson loves a white woman who, after enduring the agonies of their exile, commits suicide. This act crushes Jefferson's will to resist

any longer the pressures from the white world to throw a title fight and thereby to sell the championship back to his enemies. All this is very neat, very easy to plot out, and, of course, fully magnetized to draw the filings of our sympathy straight away onto Jefferson.

Now in fact, Jack Johnson, whose life is the subject of the play, married three white women and upended a few dozen more. He was prodigal, haughty, wild, and dared the conventions of life as well as those of white American society. A playwright is certainly free to tinker with history in a way that will facilitate his conceptions, but I wonder why, in his turn, Sackler did not dare more, did not risk putting a life in his play that had the antics and clouds of the original.

Similarly, the white characters of the drama are almost a solid piece of subhuman surliness. I am, indeed, certain that most of Johnson's white fellow countrymen were the pious racists that Sackler presents them to be, but I question if an artist can allow himself to lean on such a neat generality. He cannot, certainly, if he hopes to astonish us in any way; he cannot, also, if he means to set down a confrontation that goes deeper than the emotional ethics of melodrama. Of course, Sackler may only have wished to give the easy assumptions of the day a good romp through a drama in which they would feel very much at home. Indeed, my own social pieties had a nice outing during the three acts of his play, and for this, I repeat, I am not grateful.

WHAT I AM DISSATISFIED about in this play is simply that Sackler has allowed a certain smoothness, a certain facile resolution to creep into his work and turn an exciting conception into an easily digested indictment which we have all heard and bowed to again and again. He is an adroit dramatist and he can fashion sharp, searing episodes in which Jefferson mocks, lashes, and rages at



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Labor Statesman

Today organized labor is taken for granted as a force in American life. Yet it is barely 8 years since Samuel Gompers was elected as the first president of the newly founded American Federation of Labor.

Samuel Gompers knew poverty at first and as a child in London. His father, cigar maker, was hard put to make ends meet for his family. Samuel, too, became cigar maker to help eke out the family income. When he was thirteen, he emigrated with his family to the United States.

Conditions among workers in the United States in 1863 were appalling. Samuel Gompers joined the Cigar Makers Union. His education began. A natural leader, he was soon participating in every phase of union activity. Learning through trial and error, Gompers became one of the first advocates of craft unionism, the labor

philosophy which was to dominate the labor movement for fifty years.

Samuel Gompers was in the vanguard of the fight for the eight-hour day, for union recognition; he was prominent in the battle against sweatshops and low wages, company unions and anti-labor injunctions. Gompers became a national force. Under his leadership the American Federation of Labor became the largest union in the world, with a membership of five million in 1924.

During World War I, Gompers mobilized labor behind the American war effort. In 1918, President Wilson appointed him to the Commission for International Labor Legislation. The measure of Samuel Gompers' unique achievement is the fact that even today his name is synonymous with organized labor.



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his tormentors or tries to hold his mind and pride together while putting himself to degrading, music hall use—and yet, when all of the fury of the play fades away, one feels that, yes, this is how it all should be seen and judged; everything was correctly drawn and passions flowed at just the right moment. But when one leaves the theater and walks out into the history of the present, Sackler's work seems like a fairy tale compared with the madman's dream in which blacks and whites are now living, and one becomes almost nostalgic about those moments of pain and fury in *The Great White Hope* which presented such comfortable sanctuaries for righteous sentiment.

HAD THE CHARACTER of Jack Jefferson been allowed some speckling that was not a result of the racial vise that it was in, had it taken on throughout the play aspects other than that of a white atrocity, then one might obliterate history and think more loosely about Sackler's creation. But as he is written, Jefferson appears as a gigantic, indistinct piece of agony, a composite of black lamentation drained of all real human contradiction. James Earl Jones, in his performance, seems to sense this, for as impressive as his depiction is, it is really no more than a series of synthesized black styles strung together. Early in the play, when things are going well, he is the sharp, bad-mouthing stud who can put on the world; as his fortunes ebb, he gives us a catalogue of evil moods, moods that seem plucked from all the ghetto dramas in which the man can no longer hold his hustle together. Jones is, indeed, very good at this, and when he stands, at the end of a scene, his body stretched in anger to its tallest point, boxing the air instead of the opponent the world will not give him, he can make one recall just what it is that is dramatically distinctive about him—not that he is a Black Everyman but rather that he is a great boxer in search of a conflict.

The Great White Hope is a play which could have gone so far that it is especially galling to see it rest-

ing in its simple achievements. As for those who found it an overwhelming, blistering experience—well, would that we all could be so gently purged.

WHERE HOWARD SACKLER somewhat ingenuously accepts the popular historical fashions, Robert Shaw, the author of *The Man in the Glass Booth*, has caught hold of a subtler twist to another dark instant in our recent past. His subject is the Jew and the concentration camp, and his hero, a millionaire named Goldman, is a man who stands trial in an Israeli court for crimes against the Jewish people.

The twist is, of course, that Goldman is in fact a Jew who allows and even arranges for himself to be mistaken for his cousin who had been an SS officer in the camps and who was responsible for the murder of hundreds of inmates. Goldman's reasons for this pretense are by no means simple, but as the trial unfolds and his masquerade is detected, it turns out that he was a prisoner in a camp himself and had been under the very authority of the cousin he is impersonating. It is over this fact that he is now engaged in some sort of penance, but it is never particularly clear just what has prompted this odd manner of expiation. As a Jew, does he feel guilty for having permitted himself to have lived through such degradation? Does he despise his people for their apparent docile acceptance of annihilation? Does he want finally to put a Nazi on trial who will at last frankly declare that he *was* exhilarated by his license to slaughter and *was* in love with the Fuehrer who ordered it? Does he want to place victim and assailant in the same booth so that they may be judged as necessary to each other, a common lump of human imperfection in the eyes of God? All of these possibilities are raised in the last minutes of Shaw's play, and if they are not frankly answered, the fact remains that Goldman does feel guilty about something, for as his drama ends, he strips off the SS uniform he has worn throughout the trial and locks himself back into the booth.

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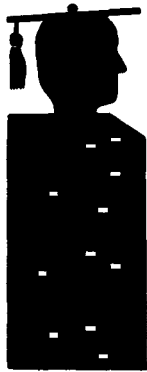
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There, in prison garb, his head bowed, he sits awaiting judgment, not as a Nazi but, one supposes, as a Jew in particular and as all humanity in general.

Now TO BE charitable to all of this, I don't think that Shaw had in mind just a simple conceit, a much diluted interpretation of the Arendt controversy of a few years ago. He has tried, I believe, to spin out a drama that would cover more than the narrow notions of guilt so many writers have already brought to this subject. It is unfortunate, however, that, like those who were far less ambitious and imaginative, Shaw is simply overwhelmed by his theme. There are too many shadows, too many labyrinthine alternatives, too many entire philosophies at work in the memories of those camps for *The Man in the Glass Booth* to encompass. It is like watching an animal in a maze scurrying about, frantically trying to find the right bell to ring, when Shaw begins touching point after point of possibility at the play's conclusion. And in the end, this is all he proves he can do: touch but not grasp all the complicated demons he has let loose in a fancy far too small to contain them.

This is unfortunate, for, until the play moves beyond its capacity, it has a compelling, sinister interest about it. The first act especially, which takes place in Goldman's business suite, is electric with innuendo as Donald Pleasence cavorts about his pleasure dome while keeping up a monologue on football, women, and the Pope's exoneration of the Jews from the crime of deicide. Long before he takes out a pistol or anxiously questions his hirelings as to the identity of a delivery boy, one curiously understands that he is someone whom the furies are after, and Donald Pleasence's performance of a man dancing just ahead of a terrible recollection, trying to gulp down every second of immediate pleasure, is masterly. Watching him scuttle back and forth across the stage, one senses a fierce emanation of will on his part to hold Goldman together, to offer

him to us as a totality of contradictions before he scatters apart altogether later in the evening. In this case, the actor's problem is perfectly fitted to his role, for Goldman, too, is trying to keep all his fragments together, and it is this felt but inexplicable effort that makes him a fascinating creature to watch as he rearranges paintings by old masters in his room and rambles on ironically about his Jewishness.

As DIRECTED BY Harold Pinter, all this takes place in an atmosphere that is more than real, a little out-sized and beyond the logic of ordinary discourse. In his sealed penthouse, Goldman seems to be detached from the world, floating in an ether which is difficult to breathe although it is of his own making. Pinter's talent at dramatic insinuation, at shadow playing with meaning, works very well through this part of the play. Once, however, Goldman is pulled back to earth, once all the terrene paraphernalia of the trial and the specifics of history begin to close in on him, Pleasence's performance starts to drift too far away from the ordinariness of the rest of the production until it seems strident, mannered, and, ultimately, irrelevant. Once Goldman's secrets are let out, the mystery that kept one's attention dissolves into annoying psychological oddities, for Shaw, at the moment when he should begin the effort to make Goldman equal to the past that has produced him, settles instead for simple pathology puffed up with a few thin, *ad hoc* philosophical speculations.

Like *The Great White Hope*, Shaw's play gets much of its power from the history it assumes is filtering through our minds with each event on stage. And again like *The Great White Hope*, this extra immediacy is paid for by history finally demanding an accounting of her own and then proving that she has been had in a poor bargain. There are times when Clio takes revenge on those who use her too carelessly, and both Sackler and Shaw, although gifted, have presumed too much on her good will.

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The Ghost of Social-Fascism

Theodore Draper

WHY SHOULD ANYONE today want to bother with such a relic of the past as "the theory of social-fascism"? One reason is that it once bothered us so much; another is that it may be bothering us again.

Historically, the so-called theory of social-fascism and the practice based on it constituted one of the chief factors contributing to the victory of German fascism in January 1933. Yet this theory has not been given any careful study, and the existing material deals most inadequately with what is still a terribly painful and appalling subject. I hope in what follows to fill out some part of the story, if only in outline, and thus to make it more intelligible both to those old enough to have lived through that dark time and to those young enough to have heard of it without quite knowing what it was all about.

But I would be less than candid if I did not confess that I was moved to look back at social-fascism because it is no longer of merely historical interest. In its original incarnation, it helped to bring about such a vast and shattering catastrophe that it once seemed such ideas could never again be revived on a large and dangerous scale. Yet this is exactly what has been happening. The term itself has not come back into general use, but the thinking behind it again has its devotees.

A new revolutionary generation has raised questions that are not altogether new. Who is the "main enemy"? Are "reformists" more dangerous than "reactionaries"? Is liberal democracy nothing but a "mask" for bourgeois dictatorship or even some form of totalitarianism? Is it necessary to provoke violent confrontations in order to unmask this type of liberalism? If a revolutionary minority strives to destroy a democratic, even a "bourgeois-democratic," order, is it necessarily going to be the main beneficiary—or even avoid the fate of the democratic order it has helped to pull down?

Answers to such questions made the difference between life and death for millions of people a few decades ago. In what follows, I have tried to

restudy and reconstruct the earlier experience as a historical phenomenon that deserves to be better known for its own sake and that presents us with some large and difficult problems of special interest today.

II

MOST STUDENTS of Communist history associate the theory of social-fascism with Stalin and Stalinism.^{1*} There is good reason for this, but the theory itself had deeper roots.

The first seeds of the theory of social-fascism were sown as far back as 1922-24—and not by Stalin. The term itself was reminiscent of other uncomplimentary terms—"social-patriots," "social-chauvinists," "social-imperialists," and "social-traitors"—used by Lenin during the First World War to denote those Social-Democrats who wished to fight for the defense, rather than the defeat, of their own countries. These older terms provided a precedent for an analogous use of the word "social" in connection with the postwar phenomenon of "fascism."

The problem of fascism first arose in reference to Italy. In October 1922, Benito Mussolini staged his "March on Rome" and formed his first government. Mussolini's success brought the subject of fascism sharply to the attention of the Communist International, which had previously given it little consideration. An Italian Commission was set up at the Comintern's Fourth Congress in November-December 1922, and its resolution referred to the fascists as "the most radical wing" of the bourgeoisie. But the old Italian Socialist party was blamed most for Mussolini's victory. "The real forerunner of fascism was reformism," the resolution declared. "The treachery of the reformists is primarily responsible for the great sufferings of the Italian proletariat."²

Though this inquest on the Italian debacle tried to blame fascism on "reformism," it was still quite far from the peculiar amalgam that made up social-fascism. But something of the sort must have been in the air in Communist circles throughout the world because an American Communist came

THEODORE DRAPER's articles and books on Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, and the Six-Day War have received widespread attention. Mr. Draper is now working at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton on the third volume of his history of American Communism, of which this article is an outgrowth.

* All notes appear at the end of the article.

much closer to the idea of social-fascism the following year. In 1923, Earl Browder, then a Communist trade-union leader in Chicago, wrote an introduction to a pamphlet by Andrés Nin, an early Spanish Communist leader. In it Browder hazarded the opinion that, as in Italy, where Mussolini had formerly belonged to the Italian Socialist party, "so we may expect the real fascist leadership in America to spring from the Gompers bureaucracy [in the American Federation of Labor]."³ This "affinity between the AF of L bureaucracy and the fascist idea," as Browder put it, was much closer to the idea of social-fascism, but Browder did not try to generalize.

It did not take long, however, for the generalization to make its appearance. The central idea now arose in connection with events in Germany.

In October 1923, the German Communists suffered two disastrous setbacks. The German army took over the states of Saxony and Thuringia in which Communists had entered the local governments. A few days later a short-lived Communist uprising was put down in Hamburg. The German Communist leadership, in November 1923, accused General Hans von Seeckt, the German army commander, of establishing a military dictatorship which represented the victory of fascism over the republic.⁴

BUT DURING THE post-mortem held in Moscow in January 1924, the Comintern's first chieftain, Grigori Zinoviev, was not satisfied with this interpretation. It implied that "fascism" in the person of General von Seeckt had also defeated the German Social-Democrats, who had been most instrumental in founding the German Republic at Weimar in February 1919. For Zinoviev, the Social-Democrats, four of whom served in the government then headed by Gustav Stresemann, were among the "fascist" victors. In this view, German fascism was represented by Seeckt and Stresemann, not by Adolf Hitler, whose first bid for power, the "beer hall *Putsch*" in Munich, was also put down by Seeckt and Stresemann in the same month of November 1923. With France occupying the Ruhr at the same time, the Stresemann government was beset by so many enemies from Left and Right and abroad that its desperate efforts to survive did not readily lend themselves to an ideological interpretation of such far-reaching significance. Nevertheless, Zinoviev chose this occasion to present Social-Democracy in a new historical role, not merely in Germany but internationally.

If Seeckt and Stresemann were the real "fascists," what were the Social-Democrats implicated with them? In answering this question, Zinoviev brought together a rather mixed group—Marshal Joseph Pilsudski of Poland, like Mussolini a backsliding Socialist; Filippo Turati and Lodovico

d'Aragona of Italy, two moderate Socialists (the latter but not the former later went over to Mussolini); a Socialist minister in the Bulgarian government of the day, who soon resigned; and J. Ramsay MacDonald, then about to form the first British Labour government. Zinoviev leaped from Germany to international Social-Democracy in a passage which contained the idea of social-fascism in essence, even if he inverted the term. As the first statement of the theory, it is worth giving in Zinoviev's own words, which I have tried to render as close as possible to his oratorical style:

What are Pilsudski and the others? Fascist Social-Democrats. Were they this ten years ago? No. It goes without saying that they were already then fascists *in nuce*. But they have become fascists precisely because we are living in the epoch of revolution. What is Italian Social-Democracy? It is a wing of the fascists; Turati is a fascist Social-Democrat. Could this statement have been made five years ago? No. Think of a group of academicians who gradually developed into a bourgeois force. Italian Social-Democracy is now a fascist Social-Democracy. Take Turati, D'Aragona, or the present Bulgarian government Socialists. There were opportunists, but could one say ten years ago that they were fascist Social-Democrats? No, that would have been stupid then. Now they are that.

But it was MacDonald who inspired Zinoviev to coin the phrase which summed up the theory of social-fascism in its first phase:

You may hurl insults at MacDonald: You are a traitor, a servant of the bourgeoisie. But we must understand in what period we are living. International Social-Democracy has now become a wing of fascism.⁵

The Comintern's resolution of January 19, 1924, on the German events followed this line: "The leading ranks of German Social-Democracy are at the present moment nothing but a part of German fascism in a Socialist mask."⁶ At the Comintern's Fifth Congress in June–July 1924, Zinoviev repeated the charge that German Social-Democracy had been "converted into a wing of fascism."⁷

Zinoviev, then, was the author or at least the first exponent of what was essentially the theory of social-fascism, even if he did not yet use the exact term. The theory was related to a use of the term "fascism" which was not aimed at Hitler at all; it was intended for the German government headed by Stresemann, whom no one ever again thought of as a fascist. Zinoviev's thinking was rooted in the Leninist tradition of regarding Social-Democrats, reformists, Mensheviks, and the like as "agents of the bourgeoisie" (as Lenin called the Mensheviks as late as 1922),⁸ not as a permissible tendency in the labor and revolutionary movements. When Zinoviev at the Comin-

tern's Fourth Congress in November 1922 stigmatized the Second (Social-Democratic) International as "the chief support of the bourgeoisie,"⁹ without which capitalism would collapse, he was speaking as a good Leninist and in the spirit that was initially reflected in his theory of social-fascism. If the bourgeoisie was going fascist, it was unthinkable for him not to blame the Social-Democrats, a reflex in the Bolshevik movement for at least a decade. This is not to say that Lenin or Zinoviev would have driven the theory and practice of social-fascism as far as Stalin drove them later. But the original theory arose in Lenin's own lifetime and was sponsored by the man who had been his chief co-worker for the previous fifteen years. It seemed at first to be an adaptation, not an aberration, of orthodox Leninism.

III

IN 1924, STALIN was Zinoviev's ally in the already raging internecine struggle against Trotsky in the Russian party. Stalin had not yet come forth with an original idea, and there is no reason to suppose that he was instrumental in giving birth to the theory of social-fascism. But two months after the Fifth Congress, Stalin took up this theme for the first time publicly and even added a literary embellishment.

Stalin's contribution occurred in an article entitled "Concerning the International Situation," published on September 20, 1924, and famous because it was his first effort in this field. In it he wrote: "Social Democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism." And furthermore: "They are not antipodes, they are twins."¹⁰ Later the theory of social-fascism was traced back to this article in Communist references to its genealogy. The images, "wing" and "twins," were repeated endlessly. Zinoviev's role was blotted out, perhaps to the benefit of his reputation.

The first to put the words "social" and "fascism" together in that order was apparently Heinz Neumann, one of Stalin's early German protégés. In the Comintern's German organ, dated October 7, 1924, Neumann contributed an article subtitled "The Newest Form of Social Fascism in Germany." The subtitle referred to the formation by the German Social-Democratic party of the *Reichsbanner Schwartz-Rot-Gold*, a semi-military republican defense force named after the colors of the Republican flag. This type of organization was common in Germany at the time; the Communists themselves had one in their *Roten Frontkämpferbund* (Red Front Fighters League). By now, however, the idea was being applied somewhat indiscriminately, and Neumann proclaimed that "the *Reichsbanner* is the classic form of social-fascism."¹¹

For the next two years, Zinoviev still clung to what was essentially his brainchild. In the spring

of 1925, he spoke of Italian fascism as "a synthesis of the capitalist bourgeoisie and Social-Democracy" and of "Social-Democracy as a wing of fascism."¹² At the end of 1925, he insisted that the "top layer" of Social-Democracy was correctly characterized as the "third party" of the bourgeoisie, the "left wing of the bourgeoisie," and a "wing of fascism."¹³ But after his break with Stalin and forced retirement from the Comintern in 1926, this line seems temporarily to have gone out of fashion. By applying it to figures as far apart as General von Seeckt, Marshal Pilsudski, Turati, and Ramsay MacDonald, Zinoviev made social-fascism into little more than a catch-all for Communism's enemies and opponents from moderate Left to far Right.

Zinoviev's successor in the Comintern, Nikolai Bukharin, was rather more relaxed, flexible, and opportunistic in his approach to the Social-Democratic movement. In the years of his leadership, 1926 to 1928, the Communists continued to fall behind the Social-Democratic parties and trade unions in membership and influence, and Bukharin encouraged efforts to decrease the gap between them and the Communists. Such a policy discouraged use of a term, "social-fascist," that was anathema to the Social-Democrats.

Nevertheless, the theory of social-fascism began to make its comeback at the end of Bukharin's reign in the Comintern. In order to understand how this came about, it is well to recall two other terms on which Communist policy was then based—the "third period" and "class against class." These seemingly technical terms may still, for those who remember, embody the terrifying reality of the years that enabled Hitler to take power.

The first to make its appearance was "class against class." It was introduced at the Ninth Plenum of the Comintern in February 1928 (a "plenum" was an enlarged meeting of the top leadership or, in effect, a miniature world congress). The slogan signified that there were now only two classes facing each other in mortal combat—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The Communist parties alone represented the interests of the proletariat. All other parties, movements, and groups represented the bourgeoisie. Of the latter, the most dangerous were the Social-Democrats (they were still being called that, not "social-fascists") and all species of "reformists." This excommunication from the true family of the proletariat included not only the Social-Democratic parties but also the trade-union movements associated with them. "Class against class" was first applied in Great Britain, where it was taken to mean that the British Communists could no longer support the Labour party electorally. Thus the British Communist leaders were persuaded in Moscow to put up, for the first time, their own candidates against the Labour party.¹⁴

Even in Germany, which had the largest and strongest Communist party outside Russia, "class

against class" meant that the Communists consigned to an enemy class the organizations which contained the vast majority of workers. In 1930, for example, the German Communist party reported a membership of 135,808; the German Social-Democratic party, 1,021,777. The Communist trade-union opposition claimed a following of 136,000. But the "free trade unions," associated with the Social-Democratic party, contained 4,716,569 members; the so-called salaried employees (*angestellten*) unions, 1,620,970; the Christian (Catholic) trade unions, 778,863; and another group (*Deutsche Gewerkschaften*), 163,302. The Communist vote was about half that of the Social-Democrats—4,592,100 to 8,577,700. Even at the Communist high point and Social-Democratic low point in November 1932, the latter's vote was still considerably larger—7,248,000 to 5,980,200.¹⁵ Many more workers, of course, voted for the Catholic Center and other parties. The theory of social-fascism, then, put by far the largest number of organized workers into quasi-fascist parties which were so far gone that, for the Communists, there was only one thing to do—destroy them.

The "third period" completed theoretically what "class against class" began tactically. In brief, the post-World War I years were divided into three periods. The first, from 1917 to 1923, was that of a "revolutionary wave." After 1923, the capitalist world entered a recovery phase, or what the Comintern called the "partial stabilization of capitalism." At the end of 1927, Stalin suddenly announced that the second period was coming to an end, that capitalist stabilization was "collapsing," and that the world was on "the eve of a new revolutionary upsurge."¹⁶ The immediate result of Stalin's pronouncement was the "class against class" slogan early the following year. But the "third period" was officially unveiled at the Sixth World Congress in the summer of 1928 by Bukharin in a manner that displeased Stalin. Bukharin failed to emphasize the decline of capitalism strongly enough, and so the Tenth Plenum the following year took it up again and gave it a more Stalinist slant. Now the "third period" was defined in purely negative terms as one "leading inevitably" to imperialist wars, to great class conflicts, to a new revolutionary "upward swing," and to "great anti-imperialist revolutions."¹⁷

The third period was supposed to be one of revolution; it proved to be a period of rampant, barbarous counterrevolution; and for this miscalculation, the chief article of faith of the third period—the theory of social-fascism—was not a little responsible.

IV

THE SECOND INCARNATION of the theory of social-fascism took place between the Sixth World Congress in the summer of 1928

and the Tenth Plenum in the summer of 1929.

Bukharin first broached the theme at the Sixth World Congress. He did so, however, with the same kind of hesitancy that marked his sponsorship of the third period at the same time. After saying that "there is not the slightest doubt that Social-Democracy reveals a social-fascist tendency," Bukharin immediately cautioned that "this is merely a tendency and not a completed process, for it would be a mistake to lump Social-Democracy and fascism together." The Congress's "theses" stopped somewhat short of this by declaring that Social-Democratic ideology "has many points of contact with fascism" and that the Social-Democratic parties employed fascist methods "in a rudimentary form."¹⁸

Bukharin's dictum that Social-Democracy was revealing a "social-fascist tendency" was not followed up the rest of that year. In February 1929, however, a leading Russian member of the Comintern's Secretariat, Dmitri Z. Manuilsky, picked up the thread again by remarking that "economic democracy" was "the fascist slogan of the Social-Democracy." But this was still an isolated reference. The first serious restatement of the theory apparently came the following month. It appeared in an article by a leading German Communist, Wilhelm Koenen, in the Comintern organ, *International Press Correspondence*, of March 8, 1929. In it, Koenen discussed alleged political pressure in Germany to transform the parliamentary Weimar regime into a dictatorship. Significantly, he never once mentioned Hitler or the National-Socialist party in this connection, as if they were too unimportant to be in his consciousness. Instead, he argued that Italian fascism might not be the model for German fascism in the sense that the latter did not need a "strong man à la Mussolini." He immediately offered as an alternative road "the fascist tendency which the SPG [Social-Democratic party of Germany] leaders and the SPG trade-union bureaucracy is revealing more sharply every day." He concluded: "Social-fascism is becoming more and more the open form of expression of the SPG."¹⁹

This theme was then taken up in an unsigned article entitled "Social-Fascism in Germany" in the Comintern's theoretical organ, *The Communist International*, dated May 1929 and obviously issued earlier. The article was mainly based on events of the previous March and represents a political line probably adopted at about that time. This article elaborated on the idea presented by Koenen about the German road to fascism:

It would, however, be incorrect to conclude from this [criticism of the parliamentary regime], that Germany is directly faced with the establishment of a fascist government à la Mussolini. Even fascist methods are subject to the changes of time and circumstances, i.e., to the development of capitalism, and are adapted to the economic and political situation of the country in question. The great change that has

taken place is the growth of fascism within social-democracy, and in German social-democracy particularly the German capitalists have found a strong support with increasingly definite fascist tendencies.

The article went on to charge that "the Social-Democrats are now concentrated on proving to finance capital that it can very well set up its dictatorship without attacking the Weimar constitution and the 'foundations of democracy.'" And it added: "Thus, in every respect, a synthesis of social-democracy and fascism is provided for the regime, in a political form, of the dictatorship of finance capital."²⁰

Once such a line was adopted, occasions were not lacking for applying it, and the resulting incident was then used to justify the line. This pattern was followed in the spring of 1929.

Traditionally, the Berlin trade unions sponsored a single, united May Day demonstration. That year, however, the Communists made it known that they could not bring themselves to march, even under their own banners, in the same demonstration as the Social-Democrats. In March, the Prussian Social-Democratic Minister of the Interior, Albert Grzesinski, issued a warning against outdoor demonstrations and marches "which represent an immediate danger to public security," aimed at both the Communists and right-wing nationalists. Afraid of possible clashes between rival street demonstrations, the Social-Democratic administration decided to ban all outdoor May Day demonstrations, Communist and Social-Democratic alike. Whether the situation justified this kind of precaution is extremely doubtful. Tactically the ban undoubtedly misfired. The Communists were spoiling for a fight, and the prohibition gave them a suitable occasion for it. Walter Ulbricht, then head of the Berlin-Brandenburg district of the party, later boasted that the May Day street fights and political strikes were "necessary prerequisites for bringing about an acute revolutionary situation."²¹ In any event, the Communists decided to defy the ban; their militants clashed with the police who, from all reports, behaved with unnecessary brutality; blood flowed in the streets. In two working-class districts, Wedding and Neukölln, the Communists erected barricades which held for two days. The bulk of the Berlin working class remained aloof, but the Communists were strong enough to give the impression, for about three days, of a minor civil war in Berlin. In retaliation, the Social-Democratic administration outlawed the Communists' semi-military organization.

Thus the theory of social-fascism had inspired the Communists to separate themselves from the traditionally united May Day demonstration, which then resulted in sanguinary street battles that were used to confirm the validity of the theory of social-fascism. The official East German Communist history of the Weimar Republic char-

acteristically reverses the order of events and makes the May Day street battles the reason for the Communist position that German Social-Democracy "had developed into social-fascism."²² But this tragic May Day in Berlin was effect rather than cause. As we have seen, the revival of the theory of social-fascism had taken place before May Day of 1929, and no such event was needed to apply the same theory to Britain or elsewhere. An obscure Berlin *Polizeipräsident*, Carl Zörgiebel, became the symbol of the new arch-fiends—the "social-fascists." Millions of people around the world who had only a vague idea of what had happened in Berlin shuddered at the mention of that peculiarly unprepossessing name. The German Communists never again took to the streets to battle the police and build barricades against the later Brüning, Papen, Schleicher, or Hitler regimes.

MAY DAY 1929 was the high point of German Communist belligerency—against a Social-Democratic regime. It did not help matters that the same Social-Democratic regime in Prussia banned the right-wing semi-military *Stahlhelm* in October 1929 for holding extensive military maneuvers in violation of the constitution. In 1929 the theory of social-fascism said that the social-fascists were introducing fascism in Germany because the outright fascists were too weak for the task, and, therefore, the capitalists had elected to work through the social-fascists. Once this theory was implanted in the Communist movement, events could be used to bear it out, never to cast doubt on it.

In 1929, especially in the first half of the year, it was economically and politically premature to locate the threat of fascism in Germany in fascism itself. Unemployment rose gradually, but so did the average wage. The massive despair brought on by the world economic crisis took over only after the Wall Street crash in October of that year. Hitler's following was still much too limited to be considered threatening. He had succeeded in electing only twelve deputies out of a total of 491 in May 1928. The Social-Democrats had gained so heavily in that election that one of their most respected leaders, Hermann Müller, headed a coalition government formed in June. A Social-Democratic administration prevailed in Prussia, by far the largest state, containing three-fifths of the country's population.

Later, social-fascism was held responsible for the victory of German fascism on the ground that it had split the working class or had tolerated bourgeois regimes which paved the way for fascism. But this was not the way the theory of social-fascism was presented in 1929. It then insisted that social-fascism was the specific form fascism was actually taking.

In Britain, it was a good deal harder to work up the same kind of case against the bloodless Mac-

Donald regime. In 1929, the British Communist party claimed no more than 4,000 members against over 3,000,000 for the Labour party. Some British Communist leaders were understandably reluctant to cut themselves off from the Labour party and to pretend that they, not the Labourites, represented the British working class. But this feat was accomplished, not without considerable prodding from the Comintern, by the simple expedient of reclassifying the Labour party as one of the three capitalist parties and, indeed, the worst of all.²³ If social-fascism could be applied to Britain it could be applied everywhere—and was. The theory of social-fascism helped to bring about a catastrophe in Germany; it merely produced a caricature in Britain.

Yet Germany and Britain provided the main justification for the new line at the Tenth Plenum in July 1929. The first report, made by Otto Kuusinen, the loyal Finnish servitor of whatever Russian happened to rule in the Comintern, took the line that the difference between fascists and social-fascists was that the latter used a "smoke screen." But, he went on, the more social-fascism developed, the closer it came to being "pure" fascism. He thought that British Labourism could be thought of as social-fascism "in the caterpillar stage" whereas German Social-Democracy was already in the "butterfly stage." To unmask social-fascism, he said, was the most important duty. The second report, by one who spoke with even greater authority, Dmitri Z. Manuilsky, one of the three top Russians in the secretariat, stated that the German Social-Democratic party was already ready to establish an "open bourgeois dictatorship" by itself. Béla Kun, then the ranking Hungarian member in the Comintern hierarchy, raised the possibility that social-fascism might be the typical form of fascism in the more advanced capitalist countries. In any event, he declared, any struggle between social-fascism and fascism was merely a struggle "between two methods of fascisation." The Russian leader of the world Communist trade-union movement, Solomon A. Lozovsky, took to task the idea, which he said was very widespread in Communist circles, that the broad masses of Social-Democracy were less reactionary than their leaders. He insisted that the leaders, top, middle, and bottom, and even some of the rank-and-file, with the exception of some insignificant groups, were going fascist.²⁴

If this was madness, it was methodical. Everything flowed from the proposition that the capitalist world was teetering on the brink of collapse. Therefore, a new revolutionary wave was imminent. Therefore, the Communist parties had to prepare themselves to "fight for power." Therefore, those who could be counted on to oppose all power to the Communists were agents and representatives of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the Communists viewed as their greatest enemies their

rivals for the support of the working class—the Social-Democrats. Therefore, the destruction of the mass base of the Social-Democratic parties and allied trade unions became the key to the coming struggle for power.

Hitler was not yet dreamt of in this philosophy. The Communists in 1929 were concerned with the fact that the German government was then headed by a Social-Democrat, Hermann Müller, and the British government for the second time by a Labourite, J. Ramsay MacDonald. The official *Protokoll* of the Tenth Plenum contains 953 pages. Its index lists Hitler twice—once in reference to 1920-23 and again to 1920-21. Müller gets six listings, and MacDonald twenty-one. The main theme of the Plenum was why they were far more dangerous than the "open" fascists who had not yet any great strength in Germany or Britain.

I HAVE dwelt on this 1929 version of social-fascism because it may have more than the later period to tell us today. It demonstrates that the theory did not originate in any real fear of the kind of fascism that Hitler represented. In Britain, the theory clearly lived a life of its own, with but the slightest respect for reality. In Germany, the best the Communists could do to breathe life into it was the May Day affair in Berlin, which the Communists themselves helped to provoke, which had nothing to do with fascists as such, and which proved to be a fairly isolated incident. The Berlin ban on street marches was soon lifted, and the anti-war demonstrations on August 1, 1929, went off without conflict. After Hitler came to power, the Müller government appeared in retrospect to be almost ethereally democratic, and many Germans, including the Communists, would have given virtually anything to get it back.

In 1928-29, the theory of social-fascism derived from Communist doctrine, not from the existing reality of some tie-up between fascists and Social-Democrats. The doctrine said that capitalism was collapsing and a new revolutionary wave was about to flood over it. With Social-Democrats in office in two key countries, they and not the fascists or even the extreme right-wing nationalists seemed to be the barrier holding back the new wave. The Social-Democrats were all the more exasperating because a majority of the German and British working classes persisted in supporting them. Yet the real issue was not Social-Democracy. The enemy was something far more general and fundamental.

For the theory of social-fascism was based on the proposition that "bourgeois democracy" and "fascism" were merely different forms of the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." One was "masked," the other "naked." The "democratic form" of the bourgeois dictatorship was considered by far the more dangerous and detestable of the two because it was supposedly harder to expose.

The real enemy, then, was "democratic forms." The theory of social-fascism made the German and British Social-Democrats of the period the main carriers of this contagious disease. But they were not the only ones, and it could be applied to many others in different circumstances. In the United States, it was discovered in the "New Deal" of Franklin D. Roosevelt.²⁵ In a later decade, similar thinking could make "liberals" stand-ins for Social-Democrats.

The rationale of social-fascism, then, explains why it could be whipped up in 1929 before the emergence of a major fascist threat. The theory was intrinsically designed to destroy the "democratic forms" of bourgeois society, not to hold back fascism. It succeeded in doing the former far better than it did the latter. It was intended to justify a Communist dictatorship in the name of the proletariat by making the alternative a "masked" Social-Democratic dictatorship or a naked fascist dictatorship, both equally in the interests of the bourgeoisie. If the only choice were between dictatorships, then the Communist variety would not appear to be so fearsome or so great a change.

V

THAT THE THEORY of social-fascism was adapted to fighting democracy, not fascism, was soon demonstrated. In the parliamentary elections of September 1930, Adolf Hitler's National Socialist German Workers Party emerged for the first time as a major political force. The National Socialists, or Nazis, increased their 1928 representation in the Reichstag from 12 to 107, and their popular vote shot up from 809,000 to over 6,400,000.

Yet the Communists—who also gained, but much less—were not greatly alarmed. By using the terms "dictatorship" and "fascism" so loosely and broadly, to cover so much ground from Ramsay MacDonald to Adolf Hitler, they hopelessly confused what dictatorship and fascism were. In order to make their own dictatorship appear to be less fearsome and not so great a change, they performed the same service for Hitler's.

The Müller government had been a coalition of moderate parties excluding the extreme Right and extreme Left, as those terms were understood in Germany at the time. It was replaced in March 1930 by a government headed by the (Catholic) Center party leader, Heinrich Brüning, who replaced the Social-Democrats with right-wingers. This reshuffle forced the Social-Democrats into opposition just before Hitler scored his first great electoral success. As economic and political paralysis fastened on Germany, Brüning increasingly ruled by means of "emergency decrees" which solved nothing and satisfied no one. The "democratic forms" of the German Republic needed de-

fense from every possible quarter long before Hitler came to power.

That the Communists should have underestimated Hitler's threat before September 1930 is understandable. But why afterward?

For one thing, the Communists had already decided by 1929 that the Müller government was introducing fascism. The chief Communist slogan in the September 1930 elections was: "Fight Against the Fascist Dictatorship—For the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."²⁶ After the election, with Brüning in power, the German Communist organ, *Die Rote Fahne*, announced: "The bourgeois-democratic state form of the German Republic has ceased to exist. We have a fascist Republic."²⁷

If Germany was going fascist under Müller and Brüning, Hitler was not needed to do the job. The Social-Democrats, in effect, made Brüning the "lesser evil," and the Communists made him the greater one. After the September 1930 elections, the Social-Democratic leaders decided on a policy of "toleration" vis-à-vis the Brüning regime on the theory that the alternative was a Nazi takeover.²⁸ In retrospect, this decision was probably one of the fatal miscalculations; it appears to have been based on little more than an abdication of responsibility and failure of will. For the next year and a half, it made the Social-Democrats, however heavy of heart, tacit accomplices of Brüning's "presidential government," which drifted farther and farther away from what had been a parliamentary regime. On the other hand, the Communists went to the opposite extreme and made Brüning so fascist-minded that his replacement by Hitler was unnecessary. Or, in the words of the German Communist leader, Ernst Thälmann: "The more energetically we unmask the nature of the fascist policy of the Brüning government, the more convincingly we prove to the masses that this bourgeois government is itself striving for the actualization of the fascist dictatorship, and need not be replaced by Hitler or [Alfred] Hugenberg [then leader of the extreme right-wing Nationalists], as far as this is concerned, then the more thoroughly do we refute and shatter Social-Democratic agitation, etc., etc." (my italics, T.D.).²⁹

The obvious alternative to Social-Democratic "toleration" of Brüning would have been some measure of Social-Democratic-Communist collaboration, or at least toleration. After 1930, the Social-Democrats and Communists had between them over one-third of the votes and almost two-fifths of the seats in the Reichstag. In November 1931, one of the foremost Social-Democratic spokesmen, Rudolf Breitscheid, made an overture to the Communists to reach an understanding. Thälmann brushed off the offer as "a new demagogic maneuver." *Die Rote Fahne* called it "a cunning game" and demanded: "Intensification of the fight against the Social-Democracy along the whole line."³⁰ This appears to have been

the last time the breach between the two parties might have been healed.

For another thing, the theory of social-fascism made Hitler weaker than either Müller or Brüning. This conclusion inevitably followed from the proposition that a "masked" bourgeois dictatorship was harder to overthrow than a "naked" one. At the Tenth Plenum, Kuusinen rebuked those Communists who still thought that fascism might not weaken the bourgeoisie. "In reality," he instructed them, "the fascisation of the state regime is absolutely no indication that the position of the bourgeoisie is being strengthened."³¹ In Germany, where it counted most, the Communists went farthest in discounting the fascist danger. Thälmann assured the Eleventh Plenum in June 1931 that Hitler had reached the high point of his influence at the September 1930 elections and could only go downwards. The fascist offensive, he said, was merely a "secondary fact" that reflected the "revolutionary upsurge," and, therefore, a sign that the proletarian revolution was reaching "a higher stage of development."³² Another outstanding German Communist leader, Hermann Remmele, declared in the Reichstag on October 14, 1931: "We are not afraid of the fascists. They will shoot their bolt sooner than any other government."³³

Inherent in this fatal reasoning was a still more suicidal implication—that Hitler was "unconsciously" serving the cause of the proletarian revolution by tearing the mask away from bourgeois democracy. However reactionary he appeared to be, according to this logic, his historic role was "objectively" revolutionary. In this way, as we shall see, the Communists actually rationalized the accession of Hitler to power. But it was built into the very fabric of the theory of social-fascism. It was impossible to maintain that "democratic forms" were the main enemy, that Hitler's predecessors were already introducing fascism, that Hitler excelled all of them in tearing the mask away from bourgeois democracy, that the Nazi regime was the weakest form of bourgeois dictatorship—without preferring Hitler to Müller or Brüning, without making Hitler's victory into a quasi-victory for the proletarian revolution, and without making Hitler do the work of the Communists, "unconsciously" and "objectively."³⁴

The pre-Hitler regimes of 1930-32 present a real problem. Brüning's regime, and even more so the two that followed in the last half of 1932, headed by the execrable Franz von Papen and the futile General Kurt von Schleicher, were no longer functioning democracies even by German standards. The question arises whether the distinction between democratic and undemocratic governmental forms becomes less or more important in precisely such a pre-fascist period. In practice, as Brüning, Papen, and Schleicher whittled down the democratic structure, the differences

among democratic forms, authoritarian forms, "presidential" forms, dictatorial forms, and fascist forms became increasingly blurred, for one reason because no one had yet lived through the type of fascism that Hitler produced. But they could not have been blurred at all if there had not been any real differences among them. Those responsible for blurring these "forms" were Weimar's guilty men; those responsible for denying the real differences among them were no less guilty. Both helped fascism take power.

The lesson would seem to be that it is dangerous to use the term "fascism"—or today "totalitarianism"—too lightly and too indiscriminately. The problem is how to preserve a very sizable margin of difference in order to make room for the full enormity and horror of fascism in power. To reduce this margin is to make fascism more familiar, more tolerable, more domesticated. By making fascism cover all the ground from Müller to Hitler, the Communists demonized the inoffensive Müller and humanized the demonic Hitler.

VI

IN THE TWO YEARS before Hitler came to power, the theory of social-fascism managed to remain virtually intact.

In 1931, some mistakes were noted, some criticisms made. The mistakes, "in the main," the Eleventh Plenum ordained, "consist of drawing, after the liberal fashion, a contrast between fascism and bourgeois democracy and between the parliamentary form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and its open fascist forms." It was, in fact, not merely liberal, it was specifically Social-Democratic to draw "a contrast between the 'democratic' forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and fascism."

This criticism served to reinforce rather than weaken the basic idea of social-fascism. The other criticisms were purely tactical in nature. One advised against completely identifying social-fascism with fascism. A second admonished against completely identifying "the social-fascist upper stratum with the rank-and-file Social-Democratic masses of workers." The latter criticism had proven especially costly in Germany, where the Communists had attacked the Social-Democratic rank and file as "little Zörgiebel." These criticisms indicated that such complete identifications had been common for the past two years.

But these were changes in nuance, not in substance. They were designed to make it easier to expose, isolate, and overcome Social-Democracy, which was given as the "immediate task" of the Communist parties. The main report to the Plenum, delivered by the chief Russian member of the Comintern's secretariat, Manuilsky, still accused German Social-Democracy of "striving to usher in the fascist dictatorship by the 'dry

road," and international Social-Democracy of assisting the bourgeoisie "to establish the fascist form of dictatorship."³⁵ In the 121 pages of Manuisky's report, Hitler was not mentioned even once. The "theses" of the Plenum mentioned Hitler only once in passing and in parentheses, but devoted pages to the need for destroying Social-Democracy. Hitler could be virtually ignored if it was true, as the theses said, that "the successful struggle against fascism in Germany calls for the timely exposure of the Brüning government as the government which is introducing the fascist dictatorship."³⁶ If ruling by emergency decrees was all there was to fascism, one did not need to wait for the outlawing of all other parties, *Gleichschaltung*, concentration camps, *Führerprinzip*, racial doctrine, *Lebensraum*, genocidal anti-Semitism, and all the rest.

By the end of 1931, the German Communists were sufficiently impressed with the threat of fascism to admit that it might be playing an offensive as well as a defensive role. "We have regarded fascism, including the growth of the National Socialist movement, too one-sidedly and too mechanically, only as the *antithesis* of the revolutionary upsurge, as the *defensive action* of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat," Thälmann self-criticized himself. This view of fascism was correct but inadequate, he allowed. "We have not taken sufficiently into account the fact that fascism bears within it *two elements*, the *element of the offensive* of the ruling class and also the *element of its disintegration*; that the fascist movement can lead to a *victory* of the proletariat, as well as to a *defeat* of the proletariat."³⁷ It had taken only three years of the most intensive application of the theory of social-fascism to get this concession from him. Hitler in power was little more than a year away.

Yet 1932 made little difference to the theory. The Reichstag elections in July of that year gave the Nazis 230 seats, a gain of 123, and doubled their popular vote. The Social-Democrats went down to 133 seats, a loss of ten. The Communists gained twelve, from 77 to 89. Without the Nazis or Communists, a majority government had become impossible, and neither could or would take part. Brüning had already given way to von Papen who was willing to take in Hitler as vice-chancellor, and Hitler would not settle for anything less than total power.

At this juncture, in September of that cursed year, the Twelfth Plenum met in Moscow. According to the Comintern's spokesman, Kuusinen, the "revolutionary upsurge" had moved on to an even higher stage. The only united front was the "united front from below" which he defined as one between the "Communist vanguard" and the non-revolutionary masses for the purpose of isolating the Social-Democratic "agents of the bourgeoisie." He admitted that "for a long time, the Communist party of Germany underrated the Na-

tional Socialist movement; and in part neglected to struggle against it." But social-democracy was still "the main social support of the bourgeoisie" and "we ought to direct our *main offensive* against social-democracy." The only concession he would make was that this offensive should be waged "in such a way that we may win over the Social-Democratic workers." In his concluding remarks, four months before Hitler took power, he reiterated: "The *main blow*, as I have already stated in my report, must in the present period of preparing for the revolution be directed against social-fascism and the reformist trade-union bureaucracy" (*italics in original*).³⁸

Soon the Communists had their wish. Two elections were held in 1932, on July 31 and on November 6. In the latter, the Social-Democrats lost ground, from 133 Reichstag seats to 121, and from a total vote of 7,959,700 to 7,248,000. The Communists gained almost as much, from 89 seats to 100, and from 5,282,600 votes to 5,980,200. For the first time in four years, the Nazis fell back, from 230 seats to 196, and from 13,745,800 votes to 11,737,000. Between them, the Social-Democrats and Communists still managed to hold well over one-third of the total vote. The Nazis were slipping, and a real Social-Democratic-Communist united front might conceivably have blocked the way to Hitler's power.

But the theory of social-fascism held firm. In its post-election statement, the Central Committee of the Communist party of Germany declared: "The decline of the Social-Democratic party in no way reduces its role as the main social buttress of the bourgeoisie, but on the contrary, precisely because the Hitler party is at present losing followers from the ranks of the workers, instead of penetrating still more deeply into the proletariat, the importance of the Social-Democratic party for the fascist policy of finance capital increases."³⁹

Ten weeks later, on January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler gained power.

Twenty-one years later, Walter Ulbricht, the present master of East Germany, admitted that the Communists had concentrated their main fire on the Social-Democrats, not on Hitler, Brüning, Papen, or Schleicher, "without sufficiently distinguishing between the Social-Democratic leadership and the Social-Democratic membership."⁴⁰ In all those years, Ulbricht could think of nothing else that had been wrong with the theory of social-fascism.

VII

THE READER MAY HAVE had enough. But there is reason for not stopping here with the career of this seemingly incredible theory. In order to grasp how truly perverse and pertinacious it was, it is necessary to follow its

course to the end. For unlikely as it may seem to those who did not live through it, the theory of social-fascism lived on after Hitler took power.

For this purpose, I have made up a little anthology that takes the subject into 1934. The various items require little comment, and I have merely grouped them under appropriate subject headings. All of these quotations have been taken from the most authoritative Communist sources and spokesmen for a period of over a year after January 1933.

THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE

"The fact of the Hitler government coming into power enormously accelerates the maturing of the revolutionary crisis in Germany. *Germany is on the threshold of a revolutionary crisis* (italics in original)." ⁴¹

"The fascist dictatorship is not only incapable of solving the social and national conflicts, but it is also incapable of really consolidating its political rule." ⁴²

"In spite of the most ruthless and bloody terror, a revolutionary upsurge is growing among the working class, which is completely deprived of all rights by fascism." ⁴³

"After the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, the revolutionary mass movement is experiencing a fresh upsurge." ⁴⁴

"The revolutionary uprising of the German working class—that is the perspective in Germany." ⁴⁵

"The present stage in Germany, in Austria, is no longer simply a period of struggle to win over the majority of the working class, but a *period of the formation of a revolutionary army for decisive class battles for power*, a period of the mobilization of such cadres as are prepared to make any sacrifice in order to destroy the existing regime, in order to lead the proletariat to victory." ⁴⁶

THE USEFULNESS OF FASCISM

"The establishment of an *open fascist dictatorship, by destroying all the democratic illusions among the masses and liberating them from the influence of Social-Democracy, accelerates the rate of Germany's development toward proletarian revolution.*" ⁴⁷

"The bourgeoisie is compelled to abandon the democratic façade and to put the naked dictatorship of violence in the foreground. This development makes it easier for those carrying out a correct, united front, anti-fascist policy to overcome the illusions, which have been fostered by Social-Democracy for decades, with regard to the role of the State, and with regard to economic democracy and the policy of the 'lesser evil.'" ⁴⁸

"Even fascist demagoguery can now have a two-fold effect. It can, in spite of the fascists, help us to free the masses of the toilers from the illusions of parliamentary democracy and peaceful evolution. . . ." ⁴⁹

"The rapid fascisation of the capitalist governments naturally confronts us with added difficulties, but the bitterness of class antagonisms and the complete bankruptcy of the Second and Amsterdam [trade union] Internationals offer us *tremendous new possibilities*" (italics in original). ⁵⁰

"The present wave of fascism is not a sign of the strength, *but a sign of the weakness and instability of the whole capitalist system.* . . . Germany was and remains the weakest link in the chain of imperialist states. . . . That is why the proletarian revolution is nearer in Germany than in any other country." ⁵¹

"Fascism does not only make the struggle of the working class more difficult; it also accelerates the processes of the maturing of the revolutionary crisis." ⁵²

THE MAIN ENEMY

"The Social-Democracy proves once again that it is inseparably allied with capitalism, that it still remains the chief buttress of the bourgeoisie, even when the latter go over to measures of open violence, including repressive measures against Social-Democracy." ⁵³

"If the fascists are persecuting Social-Democracy as a party, they are beating it as a faithful dog that has fallen sick. They are beating it because they know that it is incapable of resistance, that, when it is beaten, it will come forward all the quicker to the service of the bourgeois dictatorship, even in the open fascist form." ⁵⁴

"The complete exclusion of the social-fascists from the state apparatus, and the brutal suppression even of Social-Democratic organizations and their press, does not in any way alter the fact that Social-Democracy is now, as before, the chief support of the capitalist dictatorship." ⁵⁵

"History now offers a real possibility of liquidating the mass influence of the Social-Democratic party, which is responsible for the victory of fascism and which is the main support of the bourgeoisie, and the possibility of establishing the unity of the labor movement." ⁵⁶

"Social-Democracy continues to play the role of the main social prop of the bourgeoisie also in the countries of open fascist dictatorship." ⁵⁷

"In spite of all their disagreements, the fascists and social-fascists are, and remain, twins, as Comrade Stalin remarked. . . . There are no disagreements between the fascists and the social-fascists as far as the necessity for the further fascisation of the bourgeois dictatorship is concerned. The Social-Democrats are in favor of fascisation, provided the parliamentary form is preserved." ⁵⁸

"Even after the prohibition of its organization, Social-Democracy remains the main social prop of the bourgeoisie. . . . The present situation [December 1933] in the German labor movement offers us the possibility of destroying the mass influence of the SPG [Social-Democratic party of Ger-

many] and of reestablishing the unity of the labor movement on a revolutionary basis."⁵⁹

"Every revolutionary must know that the path toward the annihilation of fascism, the path to the proletarian revolution and to its victory can only be the path that leads via the organizational and ideological abolition of the influence of Social-Democracy."⁶⁰

"It is, therefore, necessary above all to make a clear stand in regard to Social-Democracy, and first and foremost in regard to 'Left' Social-Democracy, this most dangerous foe of Communism" (italics in original).⁶¹

"We must destroy the Social-Democratic influence on the working masses and we must not tolerate any vacillations in our ranks in the struggle against the Social-Democracy as the chief social support of the bourgeoisie."⁶²

I HOPE THE READER has not skipped too quickly over this collection of seemingly quaint, musty quotations. Not so long ago, men paid for them with their lives, Communists and Social-Democrats alike. In March 1933, the "mask" was finally torn from the Weimar constitution. A newly elected Reichstag voted, 441 to 94, to give Hitler dictatorial powers. All 94 negative votes were cast by Social-Democrats (the remaining 27 Social-Democratic deputies and all 81 Communists could not vote, being already in exile, in hiding, or under arrest). The Communist party was officially outlawed on March 31; the trade unions were smashed in May; the Social-Democratic party was banned on June 22. Thereafter, Hitler made no distinction between Communists and Social-Democrats; he took their lives, cast them into concentration camps or, if they were lucky, drove them into exile, impartially.

Yet the theory of social-fascism survived many more months. It was finally discarded in 1934 in order to make way for the Popular Front line adopted the following year. At the Seventh World Congress in July-August 1935, speakers admitted that it had been a mistake to hold the view that the Müller government had worked for fascisation and that the Brüning government was already a "government of fascist dictatorship," to have underrated the Nazi movement on the assumption that it could not take power, to have concentrated the main fire against Social-Democracy instead of the growing menace of fascism.⁶³ These *mea culpas* quietly interred the theory of social-fascism which then became so embarrassing that the Communist movement has gone to extraordinary lengths to expunge it from the historical record. There is almost nothing in its entire history that the Communist movement is more ashamed of and so unwilling to defend.

But this was no ordinary aberration, and it demands far more study and reflection than it has received. Hitler's accession to power in January 1933 was the decisive dividing line, the crucial

turning point, of the inter-war years. It led directly to World War II, from which our most oppressive and intractable international problems still derive. The responsibility for Hitler's victory was undoubtedly widespread. I know of no party, no economic interest, no secular or religious group, and no foreign country, including our own, which can escape some measure of culpability. But of all of them, the theory and practice of social-fascism was the most devastating, the most unnecessary, and the most self-destructive.

The problem it raises is: What are the limits, if any, of criticism and opposition in a democratic or, if you will, a "bourgeois-democratic" society—even from a revolutionary standpoint?

It was one thing to criticize the Social-Democrats for banning the 1929 May Day street demonstrations or the Brüning regime for governing so highhandedly. There was a sense, I believe, in which it could be reasonably argued that such policies undermined or endangered the Republic and made it more vulnerable to Hitlerism. But it was quite another thing to charge that these policies proved the Social-Democrats and the Brüning regime were themselves "introducing fascism" or "masked" forms of fascism. This type of criticism could only aim at bringing the democratic house down on all alike, including its revolutionary critics.

Such critics could not be interested in whether wrong policies undermined or endangered the Republic; they were themselves doing all in their power to undermine and endanger the Republic. Indeed, they assumed that the Republic was a greater enemy than anything that could follow it. They were chiefly concerned with drawing a line of blood between themselves and all others to the "right" of them, including the most "left-wing" of the Social-Democrats. This line made sense only on the assumption that the Communists were going to seize power themselves. In this case they knew that they were going to suppress Social-Democrats as well as Nazis, as the Russian Bolsheviks had suppressed Social-Democrats as well as Tsarists. The theory of social-fascism was a rationalization of Communist dictatorship in the guise of rationalizing everyone else into a variety of fascism.

The Communists gained ground in Germany from 1928 to 1932. But they never came close to winning a majority of the German working class, let alone a majority of the German people. In order to make their bid for power, they opened a chasm between themselves and the rest of the German working class and most of the German people, which, once they realized that their bid had failed, they could not close. They tried vainly in the last half of 1932 to tinker with the practical implications of the theory of social-fascism, but it was always too little and too late. Then they paid as heavily as or even more heavily than those whom they had once defiled as "social-fascists"

and whose cooperation they were ultimately forced to seek.

By 1935, the German Communist leader, Wilhelm Pieck, had to avow that "we Communists fight with might and main for every scrap of democratic liberty," and the new head of the Communist International, Georgi Dimitrov, gave assurances that "in the capitalist countries we defend and shall continue to defend every inch of bourgeois-democratic liberties which are being attacked by fascism and bourgeois reaction, because the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat so dictate."⁶⁴ Whatever these words were worth for the future, they were a pitiless commentary on the Communist past. An official obituary was never written for the theory of social-fascism; it was buried silently, furtively, and shamefully, as if its very name would dishonor those who might utter it.

This was how the original theory of social-

fascism came to an end. It amounts to a case history of an extraordinary political aberration. And this is precisely what is so important and fascinating about it. Other movements, other revolutionary movements, have shown an amazing devotion to fanciful and self-defeating ideas. But these traits have usually marked relatively small movements which harmed themselves more than anyone else. There is hardly a comparable example in this century of a great movement—and the Communist movement may well be the greatest historical phenomenon specifically of the 20th century—in the grip of a political pathology capable of causing such havoc to itself and to so many others on such a monstrous scale. So extreme a divorce between ideology and reality deserves far more attention than it has received. It may be especially commended to the attention of those who are flirting with a new anti-liberal version of the theory of social-fascism.

Notes

1. In his earlier book, *World Communism*, the late Franz Borkenau wrote that "here and there the idea had been raised within the Communist ranks that a fascist policy could be carried through by a socialist party," but this refers to the careers of Mussolini and Pilsudski. Borkenau then places "social-fascism" itself in 1929 (Norton, 1939, pp. 341-42). In his later book, *European Communism*, Borkenau flatly declared that "in 1929, it was discovered that the Social-Democrats were—'social-fascists'" (Harper & Row, 1953, p. 70). The year 1929 was significant because it was the year Nikolai Bukharin was removed from the Comintern and Stalin took over completely. Günter Nollau states: "The Social-Democrats, so ardently courted by the Communists from 1924 to 1926, were known as 'Social Fascists' from 1929 onwards" (*International Communism and World Revolution*, Praeger, 1961, p. 108). Isaac Deutscher also identified "social-fascism" with Stalin's removal of Bukharin from the Comintern in 1929 (*Stalin*, Vintage Books edition, 1961, p. 405). Ruth Fischer said that the "new theorem of 'social-fascism' which Stalin enunciated in person" came in 1929-1933 (*Stalin and German Communism*, Harvard University Press, 1948, p. 655). The only book I have found which does not seem to have made this mistake is C. L. R. James, *World Revolution 1917-1936* (Secker & Warburg, 1937, pp. 309-10). An early article by Sidney Hook, "The Fallacy of the Theory of Social Fascism" (*The Modern Monthly*, July 1934), is still worth reading. It has been reprinted in *The Anxious Years*, Louis Filler, ed. (Capricorn Books, 1963, pp. 319-35).
 2. *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International* (Communist Party of Great Britain, 1923), p. 105.
 3. Introduction by Earl Browder to Andrés Nin, *Struggle of the Trade Unions Against Fascism* (Trade Union Educational League, 1923), p. 6. Nin left the Spanish Communist party in 1931 or 1932 and later became a leader of the revolutionary but anti-Communist poum in Catalonia. He was assassinated by Soviet secret police agents in Spain in 1937 in the midst of the Civil War (Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Harper Colophon edition, 1963, pp. 452-55). As for anticipations of the idea of social-fascism before 1924, this is a neglected field and more intensive research may turn up others. The two given, however, indicate that the essential idea must have developed between 1922 and 1924.
 4. Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Bollwerk Verlag, 1948), p. 102.
 5. *Die Lehren der deutschen Ereignisse* (Verlag Carl Hoym Nachf., 1924), pp. 69-70. This pamphlet was originally issued for party members only.
- Zinoviev subsequently published a "Preliminary Draft Proposal for Theses on the German Question" as an article in *The Communist International* (No. 2, new series, undated, but probably February 1924). It contained a section on the same theme, with somewhat different phraseology and personal references (the Italian Modigliani and the Germans Ebert and Severing were added). Among the formulas in this article were: "In its gradual degeneration, the entire international social-democracy has become objectively nothing but a variety of fascism" (p. 93), and "the leading strata of German social-democracy have themselves turned fascist" (p. 97).
- The career of Marshal Pilsudski illustrates how difficult it was to apply this line. After classifying him as a fascist, the Polish Communists made common cause with him and assisted his coup of May 1926, not without the Comintern's knowledge (M. K. Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland*, Harvard University Press, 1959, pp. 118-19).
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-6.
 7. G. Sinowjew, *Die Weltpartei des Leninismus* (speeches at the Fifth Congress) [Verlag Carl Hoym, 1924], p. 40.
 8. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 310 (March 1922).
 9. *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, 1923), p. 63.

10. Stalin, *Works* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, [Moscow], 1953), Vol. VI, pp. 294-95.
11. *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* (Berlin), October 7, 1924, pp. 1724-25. Stalin's article on the "International Situation" appeared in the same organ dated September 30, 1924, only about a week earlier. The English version of Neumann's article may be found in *International Press Correspondence*, October 23, 1924, pp. 838-39, with the subtitle as title.
12. *Protokoll der Erweiterten Exekutive*, March-April 1925 (Carl Hoym Nachf., 1925), p. 40.
13. *Protokoll der Erweiterten Exekutive*, November-December 1926 (Carl Hoym Nachf., 1927), p. 563.
14. The process of persuasion may be followed in *Communist Policy in Great Britain* (Communist Party of Great Britain, 1928), which gives the main speeches and resolutions. However, the first use of "class against class" seems to have come in France in an "Open Letter to Party Members" in *l'Humanité* of November 24, 1927. But it was here intended for the opposite purpose—to induce the French Socialist party to enter into an electoral alliance.
15. These figures are taken from an East German Communist source: Siegfried Vietzke and Heinz Wohlgemuth, *Deutschland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik 1919-1933* (Dietz Verlag, 1966), pp. 324-25, 329.
16. Stalin, *Works* (Foreign Languages Publishing House [Moscow], 1954), Vol. X, pp. 291, 297.
17. *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale*, 1929, p. 412.
18. *International Press Correspondence*, September 4, 1928, p. 1039 (Bukharin) and November 23, 1928, p. 1571 (theses).
19. *Ibid.*, February 22, 1929, p. 140 (Manuilsky), and March 8, 1929, p. 227 (Koenen).
20. "Social-Fascism in Germany," *The Communist International*, May 1929, pp. 529-30.
21. *Protokoll des 10. Plenums*, op. cit., p. 368. This passage may also be found in Ulbricht's collected works, *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Dietz Verlag, 1954), Vol. I, p. 444. Otherwise, this speech has been ruthlessly cut and bowdlerized to remove all traces of the term "social-fascism" which was generously sprinkled about in the original. Without any warning to the reader, the material in this volume, supposedly documentary, has been altered to conform to the postwar line, and the tell-tale words, "social-fascist," have been changed to the more respectful "Social-Democratic."
22. Vietzke and Wohlgemuth, op. cit., p. 167.
23. In his autobiography, *Serving My Time* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1940), Harry Pollitt, the long-time general secretary of the British party, tells how he ran against Ramsay MacDonald in the 1929 election. The text of his election address, given in full in the book, makes little sense without some reference to the "third period," "class against class," and "social-fascism," which Pollitt carefully avoided mentioning by the time the book was published. This address stated in the true style of its period: "The Labour party is the most dangerous enemy of the workers because it is a *disguised* party of capitalism" (italics in original). The vote in Seaham Harbour, a largely miners' constituency, was 35,615 for MacDonald, candidate of the disguised party of capitalism, and 1,451 for Pollitt, candidate of the only party of the proletariat.
24. *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale*, July 3-19, 1929 (Verlag Carl Hoym Nachf., 1929/?, pp. 39-40 (Kuusinen); 63 (Manuilsky); 191 (Béla Kun); 390-91 (Lozovsky). It should be noted, as a curiosity, that some of the foremost Comintern leaders earned their credentials as refugees from revolutionary failures. Kuusinen came to Russia after the Finnish defeat of 1918, Béla Kun after the Hungarian fiasco of 1919, and the same was true in different circumstances of the Italian, Palmiro Togliatti, then known as Ercoli, and the Bulgarian, Georgi Dimitrov.
25. "It is now necessary to point out that the Roosevelt 'new deal' program represents not only the strengthening of the open fascist tendencies in America, but also that it is quite consciously and systematically supporting and developing social-fascist ideas, organizations, and leaders. Roosevelt has a very special need for the social-fascists" (*The Communist*, August 1933, p. 734).
26. Flechtheim, op. cit., p. 164.
27. *Die Rote Fahne*, December 2, 1930, cited in *International Press Correspondence*, December 4, 1930, p. 1125.
28. *Das Ende der Parteien 1933*, edited by Erich Mattias and Rudolf Morsey (Droste Verlag, 1960), pp. 105-9. For good reason the Social-Democratic leader, Otto Wels, confessed in August 1933 that his party had been "driven" by events more than any other party and had been "really only an Objekt of developments" (p. 101).
29. *International Press Correspondence*, June 30, 1931, p. 611.
30. *The Communist International*, December 15, 1931, p. 717 (Thälmann); *International Press Correspondence*, November 19, 1931, p. 1056 (from *Die Rote Fahne*).
31. *Protokoll des 10. Plenums*, op. cit., p. 38.
32. *International Press Correspondence*, June 30, 1931, pp. 607 and 612.
33. Evelyn Anderson, *Hammer or Anvil* (Left Book Club, 1935), p. 144.
34. The idea that the fascists might in some way help the revolution goes back to Lenin. In his speech to the Comintern's Fourth Congress on November 13, 1922—the next-to-last of his life—Lenin remarked: "Perhaps the fascists in Italy, for example, will render us a great service by explaining to the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet insured against the Black Hundreds. Perhaps this will be very useful" (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 333). The "Black Hundreds" were extra-legal armed bands organized in 1905 to defend the Tsarist regime. Lenin's statement was made only two weeks after Mussolini's takeover, before he or anyone else had much experience with fascism in power. Nevertheless, Stalin took the same line, much more strongly, and with much less excuse, eleven years later after Hitler took power.
35. D. Z. Manuilsky, *The Communist Parties and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Modern Books, 1931), pp. 37 and 73.
36. *XIth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International: Theses, Resolutions and Decisions* (Modern Books, 1931), pp. 8 (Hitler); 9 (main mistakes); 15-16 (immediate task); 18 (tactical criticisms).
37. Ernst Thälmann, *International Press Correspondence*, December 10, 1931, p. 1137, from a condensed version of an article in *Die Internationale*, November-December 1931 (italics in original).
38. O. Kuusinen, *Prepare for Power* (Workers Library Publishers, 1932), pp. 35, 85-87, 96, 106-7, 141. The same line was taken by the theses and resolutions, *Capitalist Stabilization Has Ended* (Workers Library Publishers, 1932), pp. 10-13.
39. *International Press Correspondence*, November 17, 1932, p. 1100.
40. Walter Ulbricht, op. cit., p. 455. This admission was slipped into a special Author's Note of one-half page to say something about "social-fascism" in Ulbricht's collected works. It apparently serves the function of covering up for the omission of the term where it should have appeared in what is, after all, a collection of documents, in order not to open Ulbricht to the charge that he did not mention it at all. But this confession did not inhibit the East German Communist historians, Vietzke and Wohlgemuth, from claiming that the German Communist party genuinely changed its united front line in an appeal for "anti-fascist action" dated May 25, 1932 (op. cit., pp. 261-64). Unfortunately for this claim, they give the complete text of the appeal in an appendix, and thereby spoil the effect. Among other things, the appeal stated that "only the Communist Party stands at the

- head of the anti-fascist struggles of the German working class and fights for your demands, etc." (p. 518). This was typical, of course, of our old friend, the "united front from below," which was meant to take away the rank and file from the Social-Democratic party and put it under Communist leadership.
41. V. Knorin (head of the Central European secretariat of the Comintern), *International Press Correspondence*, March 9, 1933, p. 263.
 42. "Resolution of the CC of the Communist Party of Germany on the Situation and the Immediate Tasks," *ibid.*, June 2, 1933, p. 529.
 43. "The Present Situation in Germany and the Tasks of the CPG," *ibid.*, October 27, 1933, pp. 1040-41.
 44. *Ibid.*, November 3, 1933, p. 1065.
 45. Wilhelm Pieck, *ibid.*, January 30, 1934, p. 116.
 46. V. Knorin, *ibid.*, April 23, 1934, pp. 634-35.
 47. "The Situation in Germany," Resolution of the Presidium of the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International), adopted April 1, 1933, *ibid.*, April 13, 1933, p. 378.
 48. Resolution of the CC of CPG, *ibid.*, June 2, 1933, p. 527.
 49. Kuusinen, *ibid.*, January 30, 1934, p. 109.
 50. Lozovsky, *ibid.*, March 19, 1934, p. 474.
 51. V. Knorin, *ibid.*, April 23, 1934, p. 635.
 52. Manuilsky, *ibid.*, May 7, 1934, p. 712.
 53. Knorin, *ibid.*, March 9, 1933, p. 263.
 54. Fritz Heckert (German representative to the Comintern), *ibid.*, April 21, 1933, p. 418.
 55. Resolution of the CC of CPG, *ibid.*, June 9, 1933, p. 547.
 56. Resolution of Polit-Bureau of the CC of CPG, *ibid.*, November 3, 1933, p. 1064.
 57. Theses of XIII Plenum, *ibid.*, January 5, 1934, p. 13.
 58. Kuusinen, *ibid.*, January 30, 1934, p. 109.
 59. Wilhelm Pieck (then Secretary of the German Communist party), *ibid.*, January 30, 1934, pp. 124-25. (According to Babette L. Gross, widow of the former German Communist leader, Willy Münzenberg, who was expelled in 1938, Pieck told a personal friend in early 1933: "If the Nazis come to power, they will be at the end of their rope in two months, and then it will be our turn!" And Fritz Heckert wrote to Münzenberg in Moscow, January 1933: "The Nazis will perform no miracles and will be at the end of their rope in no time" [*The Comintern—Historical Highlights*, edited by Milorad M. Drachkovitch and Branko Lazitch, Praeger, for Hoover Institution Publications, 1966, p. 117]. The recollections and documents in this collection make it one of the prime sources on Comintern history.)
 60. Fritz Heckert, *ibid.*, March 19, 1934, p. 463.
 61. Knorin, *ibid.*, April 23, 1934, p. 637.
 62. Pieck, *ibid.*, May 7, 1934, p. 748.
 63. *Ibid.*, August 15, 1935, p. 902 (Pieck); August 20, 1935, p. 961 (Dimitrov); August 28, 1935, p. 1055 (Franz [Dahlem?]).
 64. *Ibid.*, August 8, 1935, p. 855 (Pieck); August 20, 1935, p. 963 (Dimitrov).

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A Writer Between Generations

David T. Bazelon

I CAME TO NEW YORK in the fall of 1943 when I was twenty to make my way as a writer. I was met by my college pal, Calder Willingham, who has since gotten rich writing good movies and better novels. In those days, Calder was just poor and eager and wild and daring—as, come to think of it, who was not? We had planned to leave school and meet in New York, thus to repeat the proven career-pattern of James T. Farrell, with whom we were both corresponding (I suspect that Farrell has written millions of words of advice to young writers over the years, including—as with me—which of the forty-odd volumes of Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* to read first). I was on that classic thin gold thread from home, after my get-away money ran out; but Calder scrounged and bell-hopped and borrowed. I think I was envious, in a way: the list of odd jobs on the dust jacket of your first novel was, in those days, the equivalent of a graduate degree.

Calder and I had some excitement setting out in life and discovering New York and so on—we lived in a rooming-house on 58th Street near Sixth Avenue, a cultural beginner's neighborhood, and luckily stumbled upon a nest of female dance students—before he left town for jobs like putting out a camp newspaper in Georgia and bell-hopping in Beverly Hills. But mostly what happened to me in New York was that I looked up Isaac Rosenfeld a few days after I arrived. Like me (and Farrell), Isaac was from Chicago. Young men from the provinces; as I recall, there was a lot of that in Balzac.

In many ways, Isaac was a very exceptional person. Exceptionally talented as a literary stylist and talker and performer (his imitations of friends were hilarious) and scene-maker and general doer. But most exceptional of all, with him you could take your own life seriously, any part of it you wanted, and he would really help—he really wanted to help. That was the great novelist in him that never got squared away—never got down to writing novels. (He died young, after writing a pretty good standard Ph.D.-type family

background novel and, for No. 2, a wild one called *The General*, written at the height of the Kafka wave and, in its ebb, not published.) All of Isaac's good friends, including myself, believed that he could and would one day write a great comic novel—maybe like Gogol—about Village intellectual life. That is, about us. With hindsight, I see now that we believed this so deeply not simply because of his unquestioned talent, but also because he had done so much, as a novelist merely marking time, to create the serio-comic scene he would one day memorialize. (We were all so devoted to The Word that each of us was willing to take his lumps, personally, in the course of its grand realization—unlike the inhabitants of some other Peyton Places.)

ANYWAY, ISAAC introduced me to people—indeed, through him I met most of the population of my future life in New York, both the famous and the merely significant. He was a *center*; and his utterly undistinguished apartment on Barrow Street was a *meeting-place*. Isaac had come to New York, perhaps in 1940, to study philosophy with Sidney Hook (I think); by then, the Chicago Writers' Project of the WPA had folded, spreading unemployed talent, including his, in all directions. By that time, however, there were nearly jobs (that brief hiatus after WPA released, and before OWI saved, an important segment of mankind) and Isaac had occupied one on the trade journal, *Ice Cream World*. When I got to New York, he had already advanced in his editing-foreating career to an editorial position with the *New Republic*. It was still a shame and a disgrace to work for the *New Republic*—because they had defended the Moscow Trials, and hadn't exactly done everything else right either—but what the hell, a job was a job, even if it was high class.

But more important, Isaac was writing for *Partisan Review*—and only a year or two away from becoming their golden boy of the newer generation. To characterize as much history as the PR Grouping represented in one or two sentences is at least impossible; so I will take three or four. First of all, the unplaced talent that for awhile found a place there: it would take too long to mention all the important names, but just a few years ago the two current major novels were written by graduates, Mary McCarthy and Saul

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Bellow (each of whom was firmly identified with the Grouping, from the beginning of his and her career, not merely passing through). Besides people, there was The Issue: to integrate literary modernism and the best in Marxist thought, thus to build yet another immigrant beachhead on the American shore. And The Method: *chutzpah*—directed against the established academy, on both Marxist and modernist grounds. And finally, The Ethnic: everybody was Jewish, or acting that way—especially including Mary McCarthy and Dwight Macdonald, our most distinguished *goyim*. (It was a necessary badge of dishonor.) The PR Grouping served for its time as a great market-place of sensibility; a highly significant *ad hoc* or street university; and, all in all, one of our better European imports.

Isaac's gang—especially his boyhood pals, Oscar Tarcov and Saul Bellow, as well as some University of Chicago classmates—were known as the Chicago Dostoyevskians. Through them, an important provincial connection with the metropolitan center was established. I guess I was the last of the travelers from Chicago to join in. Anyway, I was always The Kid, the youngest by five years or more. And Isaac Rosenfeld, perhaps the brightest burned-out star of them all, provided me with a whole new life in the literary capital. He had me writing a book review for the *New Republic* within a few days of my arrival in New York; and not much later sent me around to see Dwight Macdonald who, in a breakaway from the reduced political emphasis of *Partisan Review*, was then getting ready to publish *Politics*—which became the only high-level critical voice during the remainder of the war.

TO THE KID from Chicago, New York was an astoundingly bright new world, filled with Jews of marvelous variety: like a supermarket kind of candy store, with versions of heritage, row-upon-row, freely to be chosen from.

I was second-generation; they were not. It took me nearly twenty years to come to terms with the fact. I know a great deal about light mulattoes calling themselves "black."

A couple of years ago I ran into a woman I had known in those early days—an authentic Bronx intellectual who in fact has since become something of a Jewish scholar. We had barely exchanged pleasantries when a special greedy smile appeared (after long study, I now know what this bit of intellectual femininity means: *I am going to eat you alive—wait a minute, as soon as I find the horseradish*), and she remarked, "For crissake, when did you become so Jewish?" I tried to explain how it happened, but she wasn't having any. "Come on, you had a clear midwestern accent; you didn't know a word of Yiddish; you can't fool me—I remember it." See? Already I was "fooling" her. So, before she had a chance to explain my anti-Semitism to me, I smiled sheepishly, etc.

(which, after equally long study, means: *Lady, you'll never find the horseradish*).

I am a self-created, phony Jew. I admit it—that is, I am willing and I still try, occasionally, to admit it. No go: the best I get is a forgiving glance. Gentiles think I am trying to "pass" in an unacceptably primitive fashion; Jews with genuine ethnicity in their upbringing are nonplussed, and simply deal with my implausible chatter as best they can. The only ones who understand and sympathize are the two or three second-generation Jews who have done what I did—and the numerous intellectual Gentiles who were tempted to do it.

It took years of effort to create this absurd situation. When it finally began to bore me a while back, however, I found that it was ineradicable. The me-inside-me I talk to all day long no longer had the youthful daring to learn to speak naked American (and, being a writer, I certainly could not fetter or forgo that essential me-to-me conversation).

What led me into this endeavor, apart from my own ambition and the loud voices of my friends, was my startled reading of Sartre's *Qu'est-ce que le juif?* when I was too young and too logical to resist it. Such a brilliant *goy!* He convinced me that I faced the iron choice of existing as an authentic or an inauthentic Jew. Loaded at the time with *chutzpah*, I went for the jugular. And that's how I became such a fraud.

I try on occasion to admit that I am a phony Jew; but I refuse to apologize for it. The reason is that I have been living out this special life of mine in America; and here in America the Jew-as-metaphor—born, created, or merely borrowed—is peculiarly appropriate. Jews everywhere have always been Somebody Else: that was the Big Thing that God laid on them. And since (really) so many people in America were almost Somebody Else, anyone trained to the role was clearly starting ahead of the crowd—even if type-cast. There is no question: when the Jew and America came together, something very special happened. The Jews were *it*—rather than some other ethnic grouping—because something weird in that multi-millennial training stint of theirs set them up superbly for the mad American dash for Success. (My father, who failed, died of bitter embarrassment. In fact and finally, however, he spanned the generations: having flopped in plastic novelties and music boxes, at death's door he had a hit in modern educational materials.)

The Jews were it, but not just the Jews: it has been reported on good authority that Mike Quill's brogue was well rehearsed and retained. Someone, I am certain, will one day write a whole book illustrating the overall point with an Italian accent. Why not? It's an *American* story. With the Jews, however, there was more new-identity eagerness and capacity: after all, we had Al Jolson, Hollywood, sociology, General Sarnoff, and a sub-

stantial hunk of middle-management advertising—and that's leaving out the Sephardim and the fancy Germans from before the Civil War. Who else from steerage can claim that good? It all began with Show-Biz-out-of-Seventh-Ave.; and went from there to the Intellectual sons. And so quick in some instances—and the fathers so pre-occupied—that the sons had to concoct traditions the same way sexual knowledge was gained: on the street.

So, to begin with, I became a *Jewish* intellectual—even if I had to scramble some to get there.

HERE IS MY big point, merely introduced by the foregoing story (and to be elaborated later on): We Americans are a communityless nation. Consumerism—grabbing all those goodies, with the media pistol-whipping us from the home to the shopping center and back again—is our basic national community (or our substitute for it). I have lived in this absurd community, as weakness dictated, with the status of an ungrateful visitor. I never made very much money, so never really got caught up in the buying game; nor was I much interested. My father was like that, too: he never spent on anything except grabbing dinner-checks to which he was not entitled, and my education. (I'm not certain, but for the latter I think he actually stole a little.) For him, money-making was mostly a box-score kept by the natives.

Instead of the usual Consumerism and money-making, my life has been based on a magnificent effort to confuse ideas and community, mind and body, conversation and life. The energy and talent I have devoted to this absurd project! My excuse—no, my explanation (or the beginning of it)—is that this dominating impulse had very deep roots. My life as I know it began with a certain problem of the body, coming to awareness at age three or four or five. I had an accident and lost an arm. This problem stimulated my mind ahead of time, or out of sequence, which led almost immediately, I think, to two different but simultaneous distortions of emphasis: 1) I sought too much outside my own physical being for compensatory jurisdiction (control in fact and by right) of my own body; and 2) I became both internally and externally imperialist as to the jurisdiction of the mind, my own and others. (Please excuse this manner of stating the matter: as one consequence of what I am trying to describe, many people told me I should become a lawyer and, helplessly, I finally did. So now I talk like one.)

These two distortions came together, and set the pattern of my life, when I was seven. This did not happen inevitably, out of some merely self-generated dynamic. Its occurrence had to do with my family circumstance (the obvious hot-house of hot ideas about community). My parents screamed at each other—frequently, devotedly, as if the real-

est thing of all was then happening. I got the message; but I couldn't accept it. Instead, I mobilized my distortions, or they were mobilized for me (at that age, the difference is not important), to recreate the basic family community by digging into the source of the difficulty with the tin shovel of my own reason and need. (My older sister regularly slammed the door of her private room: what she did inside, no one ever knew.) For the next five or six years, until the advent of puberty, I refereed all quarrels between my mother and father: significantly, these were also the worst years of the Depression, and the family was on the road part of the time. Anyway, I was the youngest and most devoted marriage counselor in the history of our nation. Shortly after I retired, battle-worn and utterly defeated, Mayor Edward J. Kelly himself personally pinned the Eagle Scout medal on my deserving chest—right there in the actual Chamber of Thieves of the City of Chicago.

Veterans of Waterloo and Gettysburg lived out their lives recounting the glories of that defeat. Not less have I. This experience of the inner battleground has served as my basic training in community-building; the compulsive use of intellect in that process (I have not lost an argument or won anything important in my family since the age of seven); and the various techniques of controlling the terror and other emotion consequent upon having to be where one is in a community-less place like America, with whatever one has to make do with.

What was I, what would I have been apart from these distortions, and their particular mobilization? I don't know (and imagining is no fun). I guess I was or would have been gorgeous and perfect, like my father and my son before they, too, became somewhat over-involved in wilful community-mending here in America.

WHEN I GAVE UP ON marriage counseling—following one last grand confrontation, which my sister sabotaged—the consequences, or at least the rapidly succeeding events, were extreme and fateful and seem to me to presage all the warring elements of my life-long personality. The major happenings were these:

1) The choo-choo train that was to carry me from home was on the tracks and rolling. Many times I looked back; but never for a true return. Any salvation of mine could thereafter be initiated only by further escape. All this was accomplished more by instinct than reflection (although I was already an intellectual, lacking only the confirming experience of reading my first book as one).

2) As if from nowhere, I suddenly discovered a comic talent. I became an appreciated performer, a leader in schoolroom hijinks, and shortly abandoned actual (not imagined) fist-fighting forever. Previously, my greatest social success had been in fighting; thereafter, it was all to be in word-

performance, mostly comic—and the verbal fist-fighting kind.

3) I made an initial effort at praying, waited the better part of a week for results, and have never again spoken seriously to any but an imagined God.

4) After long reflection, I made the toughest judgment of my life. I closed out the counseling file by deciding that my ferocious father—who, in the absence of calculated self-interest, could speak reasonably to no one but me—had to bear the major responsibility for the interminable screaming and unlivable emotionality of the home; that I didn't love my mother as much after the counseling years as I had when they began, and that her mind and soul were unforgivably less available than my father's; and finally that, however much it shamed me, I preferred my father as a person and a presence, for his charm, quickness, ferocity, tobacco smell, and even (much later) his intelligence—all in all, for his magnificence as a life-performer, even though he never took the immediate family seriously as an audience, and would come home only to sulk and glower. In short, whatever its provocations, I despised my mother's martyrdom.

5) Also, to speak quickly, I embarked on a course of ritual self-containment by collecting, trading, and stealing stamps; got a dumb answer from a teacher, and never trusted one again; joined the Boy Scouts as if it were the Foreign Legion, and ended my career several years later as a decorated cashiered colonel; agreed with The Powers to become a lawyer on the single condition that I be allowed to survive the public school system without adopting the hideous notion that I in any way belonged there; and, of course, suffered the eternal earthquake of puberty—with its marvel of masturbation, and the overwhelming dream of redemption through love of a female stranger.

But mainly I stumbled into the public library. Or, more exactly, I finished the last of their Tom Swift books and, for the first time, stayed on to look at the other shelves. I haven't any genuine recollection why I chose two yellow books both with the title *Boston*. The reason could have been the redundancy, or a desire to travel; it couldn't, then, have been emerging snobbery. I do recollect, however, that the reading was very much different from what I expected, whatever that was. The two volumes were first a fictional and then a factual recounting of the Sacco-Vanzetti story by Upton Sinclair. So, at an appropriate moment, I had stumbled upon a perfect metaphor of injustice. (I must have been somewhere between eleven and thirteen at the time.)

Then I read other political books—Stuart Chase and George Soule's *The Coming American Revolution*; and I even took out a subscription to the *New Republic*. Until I finally escaped to the University of Illinois at seventeen, I argued New

Deal economics with my father and his friends. What a wonderful way of bitching him: You're in business, you believe in justice, well then, etc., etc. After my initial effort in counseling, my second intellectual career was as a political street-fighter in the home. It served to fill time; but in the end was strangely as frustrating as my first effort. My father, however, did end up switching party allegiance and voting for Roosevelt, because of the Nazis; my New Deal arguments mostly helped him to justify that changeover. My mother always responded by affirming that she had always been a Southern Democrat. So, to fill my time with her, and for my own convenience, I taught her to listen to radio reports of baseball games. I succeeded marvelously ("I don't care what happened, they're my Cubbies!") and she has ever since been addicted to radio baseball—even after television arrived.

PEOPLE HAVE CALLED ME "brilliant," in order to dismiss me, since I was a boy. My mother created the pattern. Mostly, she wanted me to be somebody else; so did a lot of other people important in my life. It has taken me a lifetime of intellectuality to get the best of all of them by becoming truly me. But did I? They made me an intellectual, and I don't really like it.

What they did was to con me into taking on the toughest jobs at the lowest pay. In basic American terms, they threw me out of Boston and told me to go make another settlement in Ohio, because I was so brilliant and unwelcome. But, it must be admitted, all basic American effort is frontier effort of this kind. And, increasingly during my lifetime certainly, the American frontier is a mental and spiritual one.

The reason I don't much care for the life and work that was thus "chosen" for me—being an intellectual—is simply that it is too strenuously lonely on this frontier. The United States is a very lonely place in any event. Given our "thin" communal beginnings, and the generational transfer of these inadequate "traditions" occurring at a nearly unbearable pace, we are all excessively self-created: so many Americans live their lives as if they were mostly writing a novel about it. So it seems an untoward exaggeration of this dangerous national condition that one's own circumstance be endlessly elaborated in image and idea, as a matter of daily work. In America perhaps no one should engage in thinking as a full-time occupation. Thinking in general terms, I mean: the usual conniving and brokerage and other immediately instrumental thought ought, if anything, to be multiplied. It constitutes the essential twine and glue that hold our flimsy social forms together, and is much to be preferred to the numerous revivalist ideologies and enthusiasms and other bursts of fashion that typically compete with our despicable practicality in this national adhesive function.

Thick communal beginnings and a tight generational passage are the required conditions of happy intellectuality. Along with most Americans, I can only imagine these. Even a rich world of symbol-reference, in the absence of such conditions, is inadequate: no language or other art-form can make up for the absence. But the burden to do so nevertheless has fallen traditionally upon the communicator; and the modern attempt of the artist to make his language account for the absent conditions is killing. It is only the devilish temptation to satisfy oneself with an artificially trained elite audience that has kept us in business at all during the endless decades since the 18th century introduced our modern complexity—and traduced the ultimate problem of human communication.

Hence the modern power of critics, who create audiences for favored communicators. What Mencken alone did for Dreiser in establishing the latter's reputation, teams of scholars were later recruited to accomplish for Eliot, Joyce, Pound, etc. Out of my own historical moment, I remember a writer who had been so completely prepared for by highbrow critics that the reading was quite superfluous: she wrote and wrote and rewrote a silly butch novel that, if it had not derived from Flaubert and had not been sentimentally ugly throughout, would have been studied by scholars only. In the 1940's, we were properly prepared as an audience, so we read it avidly. This is not a period of great expression: it is a period of exceptionally shrewd workmanship—and occasional genius-thrusts (e.g., Norman Mailer) in the transcendent business of discovering or creating audiences.

Without tradition or common experience, there is no language. That is the awful truth too long ignored. There is no final magic in words. The occasional *zoom* in meaning unexpectedly come alive—and that has reference to commonality of experience, condition, fantasy, identification: *reference*, newly recognized. Words are just words: they are the instruments of meaning, not the thing itself. Also with other symbols—and paint, and sound, and so on. There is a forgotten reality of the relation between artist and audience that has now been fudged-over with high-class conversation for nearly two centuries. Enough. Unless we get back in touch with the reality of communicator/audience, the entire intellectual endeavor is in basic jeopardy. We could end up talking nonsense to each other, in highly fashionable terms.

A PAUSE IS INDICATED HERE, to connect up some of the strands that have been and will be—and can only be—adumbrated in this brief essay about my experience of having been an intellectual in this eccentric country during the recent very busy and noisy quarter-century. I choose the theme of “community” as primary because, de-

spite its difficulty, it is. Primary for understanding this country, modern life, and the potentials of intellectuals in relation thereto. Please note the similarity of root—“community” and “communication.” Community is *assumed* for purposes of language. This assumption is no longer justified—not for all language, not for any particular meaning to be conveyed by language. Please note, also, the current incredible use of the word “meaningful”—revoltingly recurrent in the usage of our people, all the way from President to recently reformed drop-outs. One says “meaningful” when one does not know or does not dare to say what one means—as in, “meaningful program for the cities,” etc. So this non-word has now become one of the more meaningful ones in our current language: because of the lack of tradition and other commonality of experience.

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST BURDEN in being an intellectual is that you are called upon to direct and delimit your own thoughts—to keep them from running away with you—without enough help from the outside. Some measure of thought-control of this kind is of course essential to existence: the utterly examined life is unlivable. But the presumption of high-flown intellectuality is that we all think fully and freely about everything and anything; our thought is also supposed to be intensely individualistic—hardly even borrowed at all. The fancy working-out of these presumptions provides the key to how it was and is to be an intellectual in this country, where there is no given community to save us from the infinitude of our own potential absurdity.

If I said that all reasonably successful intellectuals detest the American circumstance, neglecting few opportunities to revile it, while all reasonably successful businessmen adore and constantly celebrate it, I would certainly be overstating the matter. But by how much? Think of confirming examples in your acquaintance: each, you will note, is lying. The business of celebration is strained and unbelievable; and the intellectual's catalogue of detestation not only is monotonous, but also omits mention of considerable gratification (much of it even machine-fed).

Why these heady distortions?

I think we are simply confronted with two different forms of American thought-control—and no American life without one or another. Style is of the essence. That of the businessman derives from boosterism (a special form of “nationalism” invented for the non-nation)—the religious belief in rising land-values, along with other imperatives of salesmanship; and the proper care and feeding of profit-and-loss statements. I have always been fascinated by the fact that business borrowed the language of psychology in naming economic conditions—most notably in calling an economic downturn a “depression,” and terming

the insistence on immediate payment in gold a "panic" (not to mention a windfall as "a killing"). But the decisive psychological word in business has always been "confidence"—a thought-control category clear and simple. A businessman/salesman has confidence when he cons himself into the rosy view, that is, strictly limits his thought to the perspective of clearing inventory at the named price.

So also the intellectual, except that his inventory is ideational, of course; and he never really gets around to naming his price. He ought to, but he just doesn't. The reason, I think, is that the intellectual is our current frontiersman—the new frontier of American endeavor being spiritual Nightmare and no longer materialistic Dream. And *frontier* pricing—of either variety—partakes more greedily of far-horizon perspective (being, by definition, the measure of exchange in a not-yet-organized market). The world of ideas is underdeveloped, much less well-organized than that of the distribution of goods; and its importance only recently recognized.

To be an intellectual nowadays is not at all what it used to be: today, it involves one in a form of class struggle. Intellectuality is now an *economic* fact, in addition to (instead of?) whatever else it used to be. College degrees are important pieces of paper—some even as valuable as 1,000 shares of IBM, maybe (with the advantage over the latter that they are inalienable; you can't lose them as you can lose other "property," through bad judgment or lousy luck or excessive daring). But the newly affluent intellectual in America, trading upon his academic qualification and organizational position, has only now reached a stage of development comparable to the loud grabbiness of businessmen in the post-Civil War period; next, I fear, comes the pious rapacity of the 20's.

IN MY QUARTER-CENTURY view, the intellectual is now the purest expression and profoundest victim of "Americanism"—if the term is properly conceived as the ideology of the "thin" society abjectly dependent, for lack of anything more substantial, on moralistic symbols. So, just as those earlier foreigners, rushing blindly off the boat to embrace their own frontier infinity, readily became the most fully realized victims of capitalist metaphysics, our intellectuals are "doing their own thing" in just about the same American way as their forebears.

The quintessential Americanism of the New Class intellectual is identified by his tropistic negativism—an inverted boosterism derived from Good Guy/Bad Guy moralism. This folk material taken from frontier Protestantism has now, moreover, been made widely available on network television. Just as the rosy view can be a terrible tyranny, so also this Hey-another-boil! outlook. But it is a drag to have to detest everything irre-

spective of race, creed, or color. Especially as one becomes aware that the underlying point of this greedy general disparagement is that the New Class is not yet in control of the country: they are knocking the other guy's real estate, and will boost it better than he did—be assured—once it is theirs. (So many New Class intellectuals, after all, earn their livings in advertising and related booster-industries.)

To be short about it, certified conformity as to opinion and language is regularly chosen by intellectuals as the favored means of community-building. The factual America, now, is a mess of job-oriented consumers—who hardly know what they are doing, much less remember where they came from—enjoying merely spatial contiguity. So little of substance outside the media (and other similarity of life based on product-use), and the job (and other shared formative experiences like college, the army, the gang) is *given* to us—that all of it can be classed as debris more or less useful in community-creation. The only American community we really believe in and accept is that of The Successful. But this belief works only for those who persist in seeing themselves as failures. For the annointed ones, this Believed Community is a grisly parody of the real, friendly thing.

The runaway trend at the moment—especially among intellectuals, but not only them—is *community according to principle*, especially by virtue of political principle. This kind of sloganeering effort at community is so utterly American—deriving so obviously from the slogan-culture of media advertising—that the blatant anti-Americanism of those leading the parade seems weirdly similar to Jewish or other ethnic self-hatred. It is almost as if we had decided that the only way to stick together was to enforce small-town or ethnic conformism on a national scale—naturally using the only natural materials available, namely, simple moralistic ideas. E.g.: The best educated people in the United States were not able to disavow the Vietnam war policy without attacking historical blood-letting in general. A technological advance over lignite called "napalm" (lignite was widely used in World War II, and was much more destructive even than the atom bomb as used in that war), providing for limited rather than uncontrolled burning, became the ferociously moral symbol for the resistance to the war itself, the policy leading to it, and the refusal to discuss any other discussable issue conceivably related thereto. This wilful insistence on the horror of one means of horror out of scores of possible ones, was exquisitely American in forcing a single aspect of technology to represent infinite spirit.

But this kind of coercive equality, among individuals ostensibly striving for uniqueness and excellence, is disastrous: indeed, an absolute contradiction in terms. Intellectuals absolutely require community not only allowing for, but based on, difference and variety; yet they are impelled

to sustain their fragile community by ideational conformity—coerced similarity of opinion.

From the outside, intellectuals seem to be freer than other groups—exactly because they are pointedly disengaged from those very groups observing them. But from the inside, exactly the same freedoms can be tyrannous. For example, at Village parties in the past there was always one intellectual girl escorted by a businessman she might have to marry to support her artistic endeavors. The poor bastard never had anybody to talk to, except me. Others would come over only to favor him with a few moments of benign contempt. I, of course, suffered demerits for low taste in thus revealing my interest in money-making and job-holding (which for me have always been exotic objects of study).

To base community on conformity of consciousness is a very dangerous ploy, as the history of any orthodoxy will attest. If indulged (it will be: it is irresistible to intellectuals whose existence is devoted to the content of minds), its extreme daring should be acknowledged, and the whole endeavor subjected to continuous criticism of a sharply self-conscious kind. Since we are nearly community-less, it may be that we must be daring in just this way. But in this dangerous effort to create community even with slogans and ideological prescriptions and other mood-medicine, we should retain perspective. Mine is this: *Community is the home the body finds*. The mind does not, deeply, need a home (except to justify its own limitations, which should instead be acknowledged without justification). That is, the mind does not need a home *if the body has one*. If it does not, then inevitably the mind is conscripted to provide a make-believe one. My point is that this inevitable conscription must be submitted to with cunning, candor, and contempt—toward self and others. (One way or another, the body's home will certainly give the mind much to think about.)

I make no brief here for the non-intellectual who, to ensure his own community, is able and willing to dispense with mind altogether. He merely finds, too late, that it is indispensable; and that his body, certainly as it ages, is equally unhomed with all the other bodies—and with no adequate mind left as guide through that special purgatory.

AN INTELLECTUAL IS SOMEONE who emphasizes and exaggerates intellect and ideas—for whatever reason, and with whatever result, and wherever in his life.

Any such emphasis and exaggeration will consequentially create difficulties in any of the many non-intellectual areas of the intellectual's existence. This is the *lock* of the problem of intellectuality: the *key* is a fancy piece of metal called body/mind dualism. Or, more simply (I do not intend a technical philosophical argument), the

great contradiction between idea and emotion.

In my generation, we believed in some kind of higher sexuality to preserve the "natural" animal against aging existence. The youth today, with no memories uncorrupted by television, believe only in immediate physical movement—whether or not sexual, even as the idiot Pepsi Generation—or the farthest fantasies of such physicalism, when the actual thing is impossible: i.e., violence. The violence of affluent radicals (the spearhead of what we are talking about) is not traditional violence, however: it is immediate physical action *merely accompanied by* fantasies of violence—done by or to be done upon them—and this is the source of the new politics of escalated disruption (which derives imitatively as well from more ominous theories of the modern psychology of escalation).

It is this existential difference in body knowledge and direction that creates and constitutes the now-notorious Generation Gap. This is what it means, specifically, to say that they are younger: they believe in *their* immediate possibilities of action, rather than *our* ideas of possible action now-and-later. We need their action, they need our ideas. But the lines of communication are down. So, age-old issues in the life of awareness now center on this particular body difference. Apposite categories like romanticism/classicism, radical/conservative, content/form, new/old were always, at bottom, various ways of stating one's personal perspective on the Grand Problem of conflicted emotion and intellect. Now these, too, are conscripted to war upon or make peace with this great generational thing.

We can see farther than we can feel. Also, with age, the emphasis naturally and inevitably shifts from feeling to seeing. All men die; good ideas, never. The body, and whatever relies upon the body, must lose. But not ahead of time; and no loss to dying ideas is justified. That is the ideal. D. H. Lawrence, our last great romantic Christian, could not accept this fact. He aged badly; luckily, he died young. And he hated Jews for their prior sense of age. He knew, and was willing to learn, nothing about age. I say *that* is as foolish as never having been young. All men are both—except those who are more symbol than man, like a Kennedy brother or a G. B. Shaw. (The farthest importance of the Kennedys is that they represent the early demise of eternal youth, like Keats.)

Now that I feel old, I believe in the rights of age. And I speak for them. And I fight for space of my own on this basis, just as I did when I was different kinds of kid. So to the youth: If you are an age autocrat, I am your enemy. You want to make a deal? Good enough. But I have bad news for you: You are not in my class when it comes to deal-making knowledge. Sorry, I'm on top of that: I've been around longer.

We live by seeing *and* feeling: by being both young *and* old. But the need for animal/human

connection, for modes of feeling, is deeper—deep enough to drown our best-aged ideas: nearly lemming-like. This conflict is not to be resolved (nor are any great ones). It is to be endured and expressed, at higher and higher levels; and—eventually and hopefully—with growing mutual appreciation of either generation's good work well-done. The battle between youth and age is a misdirected war against death, which neither can win. The war against death can be "won" only by living-together.*

I WAS IN MY OWN youth a Lawrencian—sex was everything to me, to whom everything was intellectual. Physical embrace was the sacrament of my existence, which was (with ultimate will) intellectual. It was a very strenuous and dangerous form of life. Please understand me: I was not playing a chaser's game—I *needed those girls*. And not as an end, but as a means.

I can state this clearly: I always wanted conversation with women, primarily with women; and then to bed. Since women always take conversation as a form of weakness on the man's part—and, this weakness coming from a "him," therefore status on their part—I was early in life called upon, painfully, to interrupt my own most desired conversation with women in a brutal manner, in order to get laid at all. (It was so easy for me to talk myself out of initial good luck.) This was then held against me as exhibiting excessive carnal appetite and untoward lack of interest in Them-As-People. Apparently there are a few women who like both activities equally, and need misuse neither; and I just never met them. That is my idea of really lousy luck.

It seems an irresistible conclusion that, for intellectual men, the practical "resolution" of body/mind dualism—an essential for continued fruitful existence as an intellectual—is in the utterly historical keeping of willing women (that's a *double entendre*). To have to have something like a real conversation before you can safely get an erection is a spiritual tyranny beyond description, and *vice versa*. If you are serious about both. It is set up here, in the United States, that to want either is to lack seriousness about the other. Heterosexuality will not survive this challenge. (Sometimes I worry about conversation itself.) There will be homosexuals and talkers here like England only had nightmares about. Unless some shrewd women decide to put an end to the awful drift by encouraging an easy flow, back and forth, between carnal and verbal conversation.

LET'S DISCUSS INTELLECTUAL method. Whether or not, when, and the way in which you get laid, if you are an intellectual, is frightfully important: but how you think—painful as it is to say this—is even more so.

*Unfortunately, this is also true of the still unresolved war between the sexes.

To be succinct, any way at all that one can manage to bring off the mutual interpenetration of ideas and experience is good intellectual method. We should be willing to pay high prices for this, even including distortions of experience and inadequate scholarship. Personally, I have always preferred to talk about abstract ideas with businessmen and about money with highbrow intellectuals. But I am extreme. (I am told that in France they have a category for me—*primitif*. I wish to hell they had it here: I think we need it more.) I didn't start out in life intending any such daring perverseness, I can assure you. I read footnotes so long and so devotedly that to this day I have to put my hand over my eyes to interrupt operation of the tropism. But it's not so much of a problem because I don't read so much any more. (Twenty-five years ago, however, I dropped out of the University of Chicago because attendance there was interfering with my studies.) I have ended up with this rather unlivable method for simple but compelling reasons: I can't stop thinking speculatively and in general, or else I would have submerged myself in American experience by becoming a businessman long ago; and I cannot abide the standard graduate student game of accumulating books-read, and using ideas and other culture mostly for adornment of self and disparagement of others. I believe in using big critical notions to analyze one's *own* nest and neighborhood.

There was a very nice professor of sociology at the University of Virginia, where I happened to be stopping in 1941. He offered to take care of me if and while I became a sociologist (which I rather wanted, then). To this day, I do not know why I went to Jefferson's university in the first place or, in the second, did not accept the professor's kind offer. He said I wouldn't have to bother with classes, or pay any more money for the privilege of not going to them. That was one of the best offers I ever had from anyone. Naturally, I am compelled to speculate why I was merely complimented, but not really interested. I couldn't, then, merely have been prescient about the future of sociology: my instinct must have run more deeply. I think I knew that I needed the opportunity of non-definition. That was a big thing in my day: not having a career or much of a job, as the Depression ended, was a marvelous way of getting down to growing up.

I am now forty-five, still non-defined—that is, defined by nothing more exact than the concatenation of my particular events. And I have had so many opportunities to come out otherwise! Not that I haven't tried. Once I tried very hard, and became a fancy lawyer. At the height of my conformist endeavor, I worked on Madison Avenue for an elite firm. I used to have the strongest sensation—walking firmly from the subway to the office—that the past was all gone and the future was all there, and I qualified in that hurrying crowd.

It was one of the richest experiences of my life, the only time I really felt I belonged to anything. (I was submerged in American experience, not then merely an intellectual.) It was damn good fun while it lasted. But I couldn't figure out what to do with the money I was making; inadvertently I allowed it to accumulate in the bank; in 1958 the federal government generously added thirteen weeks to the state's twenty-six weeks of unemployment compensation; and my seal of acceptance was doomed. A year without working—financed on my own!

MY EXTENDED vacation started out deliciously. I would get up in the morning, look out the window at everyone going to work, and get back in bed. Then I filed everything in sight. Then I had a fight with my girlfriend. Then I began to revise and retype my poetry (a deadly sign, I have since discovered); why not write a book review or two; some notes on a few essays I might get around to after I retired on social security and other winnings; and I was off again, all unknowingly, on my one and only Everything-and-Nothing career. Today, ten years later, I sit alone in a lower-middle-class dump, as it ever was, still trying to get myself organized by the strenuous use of language. My father's son.*

If I had possessed the good sense to accept the kind professor's offer at the University of Virginia, I would have become a scholar, reading endlessly in libraries. When history finally caught up with me after sputnik, I would have experienced money, status, and the same delicious sensations I tasted briefly on Madison Avenue. Scholars live good now: you don't have to go out into the brothels of lawyering anymore. But—and I say this in all seriousness—so what? Traditional academic scholarship is no longer an adequate way of conducting man's primary intellectual business.

For one thing, the scholarly mode is accumulative, and in no hurry to get back into the flux of life. For another, it assumes that the truly useful books have already been written and need only to be discovered, read, and understood. And it confuses data and quotation collection with important ideas. It is possible to repeat every idea Freud had without having one of your own. Summarizing Freud and making his thought more readily available than he did, may well be significant work. But it must not be misunderstood as the most central intellectual work (that it has often been in the past). Take the characteristic yes-I-read-it-carefully function away from scholarship, and you will have some difficulty defining (and glorifying) what remains.

There are now so many books, and so much data, and so many educated people—too many, for the present level of organization. It is impossible to grasp it all. It is so horribly misorganized; that is, not genuinely available for use in true work or real living.

BUT I DON'T WANT to persist in belaboring the greatly reduced significance of traditional scholarship. The tragic truth is that there are no adequate intellectual traditions for our time—no clearly effective and comprehensive modes of finding and using ideas, and the presentation of ideas, and relating this basic intellectual work to feasible action: what John Dewey called "solving problems." The closest approach to such a modality would be that of the White House staff, if the President is interested; or all the training-and-staff of a wealthy man like a Kennedy or a Rockefeller, especially if that man is interested in being President. After these, we have some pretty good institute and faculty-department and high-power magazine arrangements. *Division of labor has arrived on the intellectual scene*†—displacing the grandiose one-man scholarship of the past—and very few practicing intellectuals are ready to acknowledge, much less deal imaginatively with, the fact. In short, we were trained in handicraft and are now called upon to manage the Chevrolet Division of General Motors.

In the meantime, fashion and mere style have replaced weightier traditions and modes of procedure: it is a revolting period for the old-timers. One only hopes that a new tradition is being born, in that messy way most births occur.

Perhaps the single most certain source of the modern intellectual "method" (if there is any) is literary criticism—the analysis of language-idea-image, all in close combination, all as standing for some kind of current essence of life itself. So many people started out as literary critics. For one thing, book reviews are the Catskills of literary journalism. For another, we still hankered after the great catharsis of One Big Novel, even after that impulse to tell one perfect story of the times had been transformed into the shrewd revivalism of psychoanalysis—everyone telling his own imperfect story. Like so many others, I started out writing book reviews and autobiographical fiction. But with my lawyer/accountant's mind, I soon became bogged down in self-accusatory detail—from which I have never recovered. So I began to write about other people and other things,

* Whenever one of his millionairing projects flopped, he would go nervous all over, and stay that way until his one-shot-item gun was reloaded. His phrase for this state of non-being was perfect; he would later say that he had had "a breakdown standing up." Me, too. I wouldn't know what to do with a normal life if it walked up to me on the street and begged me to go home with it. No more than him. (My mother did not with him and will not with me find such reflections in the slightest amusing.)

† Quite different from merely dividing the labor of tending the Flame of Truth, long practiced by academic departments, in which the product remains as divided as the labor that produced it: inadequate assembly, where any one fact/truth is equal to any other. There is literally no department in a university devoted to using or integrating the selected best of what the other departments produce: science dismissed theology—a previous integrative department—and philosophy, another one, decided to become technical.

somewhat novelistically. There is just too much fiction in life for us to write novels—or try to see life without novelistic understanding.

As to method, intellectuality has become groupish, institutionally activist, devoted to the present although slanted toward the future, and all-in-all quite different from the scholarly mode of long ago when a few people learned Greek and Latin in order to read, during a leisured lifetime, *all* of the really important books.

THE LITERARY INTELLECTUAL I am describing and became is only the most extreme (and extremely self-conscious) example of the metropolitan professional: the biting edge of the New Class. He is by no means the king-pin of New Class position. More like a historian to an audience actively interested in everything but history. Slowly, however, the New Class (despite its greedy devotion to the future) is discovering that what-is-to-come is equally as much a creation of history as the let's-forget-it past—and not so easily overcome by the usual arbitrary effort of will.

This New Class—any new class—is abjectly dependent upon history for its models and for all the other stray materials out of which the newness of the future is constructed. The literary intellectual has a special part to play in the New Class drama of institutionalizing intellect—not in the old manner of putting it away in an institution, but in the new mode of giving it institutional power with which to intervene in historical process. Some intellectuals must provide disinterested analysis in the service of class interest.

The question of New Class style is critical. Here it may be worthwhile to compare the intellectual's pursuit of purity when I was young, and today. At twenty-one, I possessed the sappiest super-ego ever. I was so pure that I took a job in a factory just to be near the Working Class (one week) and refused to see a very kind and helpful friend because he supported the war (several months). Mostly we pursued *doctrinal* purity—Marxist, Freudian, or whatever—while emotionally we encouraged each other to anguish out loud. We suffered competitively in identifying with the victims and heroes of Spain, the Soviet purges, the Nazi camps, the Warsaw fighters, the French Resistance, and all the mounds of corpses and the millions of DP's.

The New Youth seem more simpleminded to me—more convinced in their anti-intellectualism even than the middlebrow Stalinoids of my day—and absurdly devoted to primitive moral categories (which facilitate activism). Most of all, I don't see them yearning. We were soreheads, too; but filled with ambition and yearning. How are the new kids going to make it without that?

Their main purpose, apparently, is to rock the boat. Within limits, I welcome this (but I cannot find it appealing—maybe for reasons of taste, per-

haps because my own impulse to do so is much depleted). If this activity startles some captain somewhere to get with it—which would certainly include foreclosing any further rocking of the boat—well and good. But Luddite rebellion, even if useful, is an act of helplessness. These kids, however, horrify me mostly for two factors (and many others in my generation fairly well disposed toward them): 1) Their mindless, wilful moralism; and 2) their foolish misunderstanding of the reasons for the absence of severe coercion in the society generally and (as yet) against them specifically, which makes their disruptionist tactics feasible. So often—from the sit-ins on—they have used as-if power just as if it were real power. They should be honored for their daring and inventiveness, and then treated as the political infants they are by serious men who take politics as something more than testing the limits of authority. (Mayor Daley is not the only vicious father in our midst.)

WHATEVER FINALLY COMES of the recent inter-generational *shock of misrecognition*—and whatever much or little is achieved in starting up the conversation with our sons once more on some more feasible and better basis—two things are very clear to me: 1) However we did it, we created them; and 2) apologetic pandering on our part will only compound the original (and still unknown) felony. Fatherhood is tragic, particularly ours. Especially in America.

For here, it is not merely our inadequate creation of the new technological order—and our even more inept, nearly filiocidal directions to our sons for living in it—but also because fatherhood never got a very firm footing on these shores. And now, confronted with an established matriarchy affecting everything except big-organization hierarchy, it is more badly situated than ever before.

The current generational passage is not the first seriously difficult one in this country's history; it is only the most surprising one. (We thought that with affluence everything would be hunky-dory.) The passage from immigrant father to first-generation son—decade after decade for the better part of a hundred years—has always been portrayed as one of tragic fulfillment, at best (the son's growth upended the father spiritually as well as biologically). I can personally speak for the immense frustration of a second-generation intellectual son succeeding a first-generation businessman father. And then there is the legendary drama of the farm boy who survives the merciless exploitation of dirt-farm life to the physical maturity of late adolescence, bestows a farewell beating on his father, and is never heard from again; or the more ordinary rural-urban transition getting tangled up in the generational succession. No, this is not the first time; by no means.

Still, the Atlantic voyage—or the train ride from an Iowa cornfield to Chicago—was never so far as that from the Depression to the postwar world (no matter where you started, so long as you ended up in a suburb). The transformation has been astounding. Go back home sometime and take a look—a real look. Most of the buildings are gone, almost all of the homes have been gutted—and then refurbished with the contemporary paraphernalia of Consumerism. Most striking of all, this is a *national* fact. North, South, East, and West, inside the home and on the street—all the same. The fact of the matter is that several hundred national corporations have remade this nation physically since the war, and on standard patterns. With their advertising culture, especially as purveyed through street signs and television, they have gone far to remake us spiritually as well. Imagine a human being who never knew anything *but* this perfected order of life; imagine your son.

TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT CHANGE society; it destroys it. We didn't know this; we were determined to ignore it so as to enjoy our affluence; and we had our memories to help us distort unwelcome perception. None of this suffices for the youth as it did for us. Indeed, they take our "show" of a way-of-life as a big put-on. Leslie Farber suggests that they have seen the inner despair we were trying to hide even from ourselves—certainly from our sons. So the con game is over: we played hard, but we lost for lack of confidence. (If only the youth were real winners, and possessed the amount of confidence that, finally, we lacked!) We built a magnificent technological order—and strained ourselves ultimately to make believe it was also a society. The youth inherited the unbearable strain along with the new wealth.

We should have challenged them more with the work ahead of them, that of reconstituting a destroyed social order. Probably the Spock-fed women wouldn't let us; perhaps we didn't dare. Now they are going about just this job—but without most of what we could have given them in preparation. And from the reservoir of fatherly despair, they draw much reason for destructiveness. Moreover, they presume to imagine that we destroyed a full, rich society actually worth preserving.

They are groupish, that's the main thing. There is not one old-fashioned headstrong individualist in the whole lot. In order to create some kind of community for themselves, the hippies are willing to get stoned and stay stoned. Just so they can cohabit, even as somnambules. What an incredible price to pay! (And what a lesson for us that they pay it.) This hunger for community—the basic human/animal connection—that we neglected to build into our shiny new world of rationalized

home-and-office life, this need is now unleashed upon our barren productivity. We must make room for it; it is here to stay. The building of community—that connection for the sake of connection—is a fundamental item on the order of the day, for all of us. No livability, no health, no relief from wilful productivity—nor from the malaise of affluence which is its real result—without new beginnings in community-making. That is the lesson the New Youth are teaching us.

I cannot abide their groupishness—I am an old-fashioned headstrong individualist, I am sorry to say—but I have no doubt whatsoever that, as for basic social agenda, they are right in that and I am wrong. So I will Moses it along, only offering, in my cantankerous way, special observations on the putative nature of their Promised Land—and which step first, which step second, if we really do expect ever to get out of this goddamn desert.

I am even willing to admit that the reason I cannot abide their groupishness is that I am a sorehead. I am still sore, thirty years later, about what happened and what didn't happen to me when I went to Senn High School in Chicago.

Let me explain myself to the youth: There used to be a thing, long ago, called "the rumble seat." In red leather, with long blonde hair flying out of one side of it, zipping along at thirty-five or even forty miles an hour, it was one of the most gorgeous bits of social landscape ever invented. Actually to be seen in one was the apex of the social order of high school. Much desired, seldom achieved: I was a social flop. An entire evening could be turned wistful if I happened to see a rumble seat sweep by . . . and on into the fading perspective of a twilight street. (*Goddamn them!*)

EXPERIENCING the social system of high school turned out to be an eternal shock to my spirit. Nothing I had known was any preparation for this marvelous mystery of the wider world: *it was community beyond family and gang*. That's the size of the shock it was. The rumble-seat society seemed all so gorgeous and distant: a superordinate fact of life. The truth, now I know, is that it was the most intimate fantasy, more in me (much more) than out there. If only that had made it less important! But no, this was—unmistakably and once-and-for-all—the transcendent order of existence. Everything led into the wider world: each thought, and every hunger, only another rung on the ladder to intimacy with *that* infinity—just a half a block away. I have not solved this problem; nor have I ever betrayed it. (I may never find out which side my bread is buttered on; but I know what buttered bread is.) Although subject to the widest interpretation, this problem would never change; and it has not. *The inner life of the wider world is where Americans must live*. One becomes an American simply by

discovering this; for me it is a dashing rumble seat, with long blonde hair flying out of one side of it.

This high-school thing was particularly shocking because I thought I had already discovered the truth about Social Life. At the end of grade school, with puberty immediate and graduation imminent, all of a sudden there were kissing parties one after another, week after week. This posed some problems, but nothing so difficult as touch football; and by the time graduation occurred, I felt expert enough to get by forever. During the long summer before entering high school, I went to Boy Scout camp for a couple of weeks, was elected to the Order of the Arrow, got a Bird Study merit badge and tied the Carrick bend (thus assuring I would become an Eagle Scout), and even saw my way to making Senior Patrol Leader. Everything was going well.

What a delusion! There were 4,000 students in that high school, hardly one of whom would admit that he had been a Boy Scout. It was scramble, scramble, scramble—not just to win the game but, even more, to discover the rules. You had to learn to dance, get an athletic letter, walk up to pretty girls and ask them for a date, pass but not excel in classwork, and join a clique. *Join a clique!* I couldn't even find one. And for four years, month after month, getting more and more hard-up.

I became a socialist because the bourgeoisie invented American adolescence in order to make us all miserable enough to work for them. It was all quite clear. Still, being a socialist—while it felt good on occasion—didn't really solve anything. The real problem was how to get into a rumble seat and stop being so hard-up.

MOSTLY, I MADE DO with gangs and pals. Gangs are the best—the richest American mode of community—especially gangs with a purpose, like

some literary or political or university ones I have known: that is, even *after* the first street gang of adolescence, devoted to sex and prowess. But I always felt like a hanger-on, and could never with certainty discover the *center* of the gang. This was especially the fact when the gang turned out to be, or threatened to become, a clique genuinely connected with the wider world—the kind I could never discover in high school.

My early experience of Social Life just before high school, when I thought I had found the handle, was—I now see—nothing but an extension of the street gang to include some girls. Not yet, truly, the wider world. But still I know that the gang, when it retains the animal virtues of the first street gang while rising to the social connection of the later clique, is the one most creative form of community in America (and, I imagine, places like it, if there are any). But this realest gang of my dreams must account for income, sex, and purpose—all necessary support and direction. This is the *Apostolic Gang*, which can both change the world and fulfil the individual. Here is where I sign on with the New Youth—to the extent that this is their interest—even though I can never belong. And the failure of the apostolic gangs of my youth . . . well, that might have been my fault. Or we might have been ahead of our times, which were still devoted to lower-middle-class ambition.

Here, we mostly discover or create gangs, or exchange one for another: there is, as yet, no wider world. Not out there in America. But in my generation, no one knew this—deeply enough, or in time. We kept trying all the closed-up avenues. The new kids know better: they are devoted, in their seriousness, solely to experimenting with Apostolic Gangs—even the Squares, who concentrate their search throughout the length of bureaucratic corridors.

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The Jewish Community & the Jewish Condition

Robert Alter

IF ONE TRAVELS around much among American Jews, attending the various rites, cultural or religious, by which they celebrate their own self-conscious sense of community, it is terribly easy to become disheartened, depressed, or simply sickened. If, however, one travels far enough and looks in the right places, it is actually possible to find circles of sanity, islands of hope. Let me offer, to begin with, two contrasting images of the American rabbinate that I encountered in recent months: the two are separated by hundreds of miles of geography and, as will be immediately apparent, by perhaps as many light years of spiritual distance.

Not long ago I was invited to speak at a very large, conspicuously sumptuous synagogue in an affluent, predominantly Jewish suburb. The rabbi, who served as moderator for the evening, was a man of some reputation, apparently regarded with considerable admiration by most of his congregants and, to judge by the heartfelt panegyrics of the woman who introduced him, held in downright awe at least by some. His platform style seemed a rather ragged imitation of certain of the tougher-mannered television interviewers; even his public moments of expansive geniality scarcely masked the steely intentness with which he was selling himself and his own views on the nature of Jewish life in America while arguing for the interests of the national Jewish organization in which he held a prominent position.

For me, however, his most revealing moment occurred before the start of the program, when the participants were invited into the rabbi's study. The congregation had recently been given a private collection of rare Hebrew books, and one of them, a large volume bound in worn brown leather, had been strategically left out at one end of the long conference table. It was an early printed Pentateuch, the rabbi explained, and though the Library of Congress had been unable to identify it, he rather imagined it was Yemenite. (Though no bibliographer, I rather imagined it was not.) The rabbi opened the volume with proper pride of possession; it was in fact an unusual Pentateuch, with the Targum, or Aramaic translation, printed interlinear with the Hebrew text. The rabbi, to complete the anti-quarian display, decided to read for me a line or

so of the original. It was one of the great catalogues of curses in Deuteronomy: *arur shokhev 'im-ahoto bat-aviv*, "cursed be he who lies with his sister, his father's daughter. . . ." Although the pointed text was perfectly clear, the rabbi pronounced the Hebrew syllables haltingly, pulled up short after a few words, and explained, "It's . . . er . . ."—with a sudden note of practiced definitiveness—"a genealogy," and hastily closing the book, moved toward the other end of the table. A pity that the monitory Deuteronomist did not include in his list of abominated acts the enjoyment of rabbinical prestige on false pretenses.

My opposing image of the American rabbinate is a somewhat younger man—the age difference could be symptomatic—who gave a paper at a recent conference on Judaica in which I participated. The leader of a large, modern Orthodox congregation, he is a man of thorough Jewish learning with a genuine academic competence in philosophy as well; forthright in his views and boldly independent of established positions, theological or otherwise, he is respected by most of his congregants, though undoubtedly suspected by some of them, too. (He reports that an influential figure in his community actually once burst into his office waving a copy of Maimonides's Thirteen Principles, with the imperative question: "Rabbi, now give it to me straight, are you willing to sign these or aren't you?") Where my first rabbi's style was all mannered gestures, that of the second rabbi was quite without affectation. He spoke as he was, so that the language he used, at least among friends, was an engaging conglomeration of Brooklynese (he had grown up in Williamsburg), standard American English, Yiddish, Hebrew, academic-intellectual locutions, and swinging slang. In virtually everything he said one sensed a man passionately committed to the values that seemed important to him and yet so utterly honest with himself that he did not hesitate to question the premises on which many of those values rested.

Over against the proud show of holy books by my first rabbi I would like to set an anecdote about holiness in Israel told by the second rabbi in the course of his lecture. He had been to Israel for the first time shortly after the fighting in

June 1967. On his return, some of his congregants wanted to know what had been his greatest religious experience in the Holy Land. Was it seeing the Wailing Wall, the graves of the Patriarchs? The answer he gave, he said, just didn't make sense to most of his questioners. For what he considered his most serious religious experience in Israel was coming across a bunch of kibbutzniks building a road through the middle of their kibbutz where no road was needed. Puzzled by such seemingly senseless "WPA work" when there was obviously more than enough to be done in the fields, he asked the workers and they explained: One of the kids on the kibbutz had been stricken with paralysis, and the only way they could manage practically to keep him with them on the kibbutz was to build a road for his wheelchair.

Now, to see sanctity not in stones or relics but in such an act of humanity requires neither saintliness nor intellectual insight but, quite simply, a quality that we might call spiritual common sense. It has not been a quality much in evidence among the leaders of American Jewry who, as the official apologists for ossified theologies and ideologies, have tended to have little spirituality and less common sense. Against this background, what was especially encouraging about my second rabbi's presentation was that it was made before a group of Jewish thinkers and leaders who, whatever the sharp differences among them, shared in varying degrees a refreshing kind of spiritual common sense. The group itself is worth describing in some detail; if it does not have the leverage to move the mountain of moral inertia of American Jewish life, it at least embodies suggestive possibilities of an honest and serious Jewish existence in our time and place.

THE I. MEIER SEGALS CENTRE for the Study and Advancement of Judaism founded four years ago by a very small group of independent-minded, mostly younger, rabbis and Jewish academicians. Despite its name, it is less an institution than the happy occasion for a unique kind of meeting—made possible chiefly through the generosity of a single Montreal philanthropist. Each summer the Centre has convened at a small Canadian resort for a week-long session during which papers are presented and informal discussions conducted on some significant general topic of Jewish concern. Most of the participants are academic specialists in Judaica and related fields, or rabbis of an academic bent, with interests ranging from Bible and rabbinics to Jewish history, philosophy, and theology, and religious positions running from secularist—a rare exception in the group—and Reform to rigorous Orthodox. There is a good deal of academic professionalism in the formal presentations, most of it quite admirable, yet the tone of the discussions tends to be peculiarly personal, for what people

are really talking about, despite the distancing effect of their various academic perspectives, is the things that make them what they are, or what they care to be.

Perhaps for this reason, some of the most valuable exchanges at the conference take place after the lectures, in private discussions over the dinner table, on walks around the grounds, or in little knots of debaters arguing late into the night. The context of the discussions, in a word, is one of fellowship, and that is something hard to come by anywhere in the ordinary academic world or, for that matter, in the world of organized Jewish life. It is the experience of fellowship—that old, honorable term has been so compromised by promotional applications that one almost hesitates to use it—which struck me as the most important aspect of the Centre on my first visit to it last summer, and this sense of mine was emphatically corroborated by those who had been attending the conferences since their initiation.

From the viewpoint of the individual Jewish intellectual whose Jewishness plays some serious role in his intellectual life, even a taste of such fellowship is encouraging and morally supporting because the bizarre anomaly of his position among other intellectuals, whether Gentiles or Jews, so often isolates him, perhaps sometimes makes him wonder whether like-minded people really exist. Let me emphasize that when I say "like-minded" I do not mean people of the same opinions but people with the same concerns. I may, for example, vehemently disagree with someone on what is a desirable disposition of Israel's occupied territories, yet a bond can exist between us because, for both of us, the achievement of peace in the Middle East, and an equitable peace, is a matter of urgency that we feel with the most personal immediacy. In a discussion, on the other hand, with someone who has no special concern for either the fact or the quality of Israel's existence—for whom, say, Israel and Indonesia are matters of equal interest—I feel cut off from any deep rapport because the involvements by which in part I define my own humanity do not exist for him. (Such utterly dispassionate observers, incidentally, are in the habit of claiming that theirs is a truly "objective" view, but I have rarely found this to be the case. In the instance of the Middle-East conflict, their lack of involvement usually keeps them from bothering to inform themselves about the complicated facts of the matter, and thus with their assumed stance of neutrality they feel free to fit the conflict into theoretical and quite inapplicable schemes—imagining it, for example, as a confrontation between one mythical entity called the Third World and another one described, in blithe disregard of history, geography, and demography, as the West.)

What I was personally grateful for, then, at the meetings of the Segals Centre was the opportu-

nity to share a community of Jewish concern with a group of people who by and large commanded my intellectual respect. It was almost equally important, I should add, that the participants were not only interested in reaching some of the same ultimate destinations but also carried along with them much of the same intellectual baggage. Now I would suppose that in general to be an intellectual means first of all to have some informed sense of the cultural past together with an interest in its possible bearings on the present. (The full exercise of this role may be growing at once increasingly urgent and increasingly rare in an American society that has been hypnotized into stupefaction by its fascination with the "now" generation and the fashions or causes of the moment.) The relevant past, of course, could be anything from the decline of the Roman empire or the spread of the Reformation to the philosophy of Hume, the poetry of Rimbaud, the thought of Nietzsche or Marx. What was unusual about the discussions at the Centre was that the assumed common past also included things like the opposed categories of Halakhah and Aggadah, the contending movements of Hasidism and Mitnagdut, the rise of Zionism, the mysticism of Luria, the poetry of Bialik, the theology of Rosenzweig, and that these were examined, explored, debated, out of a concern for their possible relevance, not merely scrutinized with the eye of the antiquarian or the collector of exotica. The discussions themselves, in other words, illustrated the continuing viability of a realm of serious discourse which at times one might think has altogether shrunk to a memory or dwindled into the shop talk of a few overspecialized academicians.

The differences, to be sure, among the participants, in religious belief and practice, in political commitments, perhaps even in moral sensibility, were quite pronounced, and no attempt was made at the conference to gloss over these differences or to harmonize them. The changing configurations of agreement and opposition, however, in the various discussions, were instructive. The disagreements, as far as I recall, simply never took place along the conventional party lines of American Judaism. Typically, a Conservative proponent of a highly imaginative atheistic religious humanism would be most sharply attacked by the more traditional Conservatives and the more theological Reform people and would receive enthusiastic support, at least for much of his argument, among the intellectually venturesome of the Orthodox. There is, admittedly, a certain logic in the particular alignment I have just described, but it only demonstrates that the discussions moved with the logic of ideas intently pursued instead of conforming to the gross symmetries of institutional affiliations. This aspect of the conference was especially striking because quite a

few of the participants held academic appointments in the seminaries of the three main movements of American Judaism. One could infer that these men must be in some ways painfully isolated within the institutions that are their chief sphere of professional activity, while, paradoxically, the orthodox on the Right and the Reform Jews on the Left seemed a good deal closer to each other in intellectual outlook and even in priority of commitments than they could possibly be to their own respective chancellors, presidents, and administrative oligarchies. Even the most heated differences among discussants took place in an atmosphere of complete, quite unselfconscious, mutual respect, while the sense people seemed to have of their own institutional hierarchies was that they had done much to abdicate whatever claim they might have had to respect.

THE MOST GENERAL positive inference that I would draw from my own experience of these discussions is that, for all the factionalism that has twisted the face of Jewish life in recent generations, what unites Jews is finally still more important than what separates them. Almost anyone who tries to be a Jew in this country must suffer in one way or another from the ubiquitous and highly ramified institutionalization that American Jewish life has undergone. Here, as in other areas, the institutions are probably a necessary evil, but there is surely a good deal more evil in them than is strictly necessary. For they have created their own cadres of parochial, small-minded organization men; they have set up walls of mutual mistrust and censure among Jews by equating loyalty to the institution with loyalty to Judaism, with each institution claiming itself to be the sole "authentic" continuation of historical Judaism. At their very worst, they have produced a leadership that too often reflects American Jews at large in all the defects of their affluent bourgeois existence—smug, pretentious, delighting in power, wealth, and prestige, deficient in the imagination of change, and at times ignorant as well. But even at their best, the institutions persist in their effect of cutting off Jews from Jews. One can grow up, for example, with the best kind of Jewish education that the Conservative movement has to offer and still emerge with the impression, conveyed more through implication than open statement, that all Orthodox Jews are self-deceiving fools or fanatic obscurantists, all Reform Jews mock-Protestant assimilationists, all Jewish secularists simply beyond the pale. It hardly need be added that the sense of the other two movements conveyed in the institutions of either Reform or Orthodoxy is scarcely likely to be more charitable.

My one general criticism, in fact, of the Segals Centre is that its organizers may have conceded too much in their selection of participants to the

division of American Jewry on an explicitly religious basis into three streams. It is true, of course, that for the majority of "affiliated" American Jews, community tends to center upon a nominally religious institution, the local synagogue, yet what now most deeply unites the largest number of Jews who choose to be thought of as Jews is not religion but a common involvement in history. In this regard, the choice of subject for the Segals Centre discussions last summer was most appropriate: the Emancipation and its aftermath in modern Jewish life. Since the Emancipation is the point—though of course it did not occur neatly at one "point" in time or space—when the entire social and cultural context of what it meant to be a Jew underwent radical and irrevocable change, the whole crucial historical process remains as a challenge and question for all kinds of Jews, affecting the thoroughgoing secularist as much as it does the traditional religionist, failing to touch only the ultra-Orthodox, who reject modernity, and those on the way to assimilation, who are indifferent to their Jewish antecedents. I would imagine that the Centre's discussions on this subject might have gained in breadth and intellectual excitement if the non-religious viewpoints had been more amply represented. It would have been intriguing to see what possibilities of dialogue exist among religiously oriented Jewish intellectuals and a secular Jewish universalist like George Steiner, a socialist exponent of Yiddish culture like Irving Howe, a modern-style secular Zionist like Ronald Sanders, perhaps even an artist working with the legacy of immigrant culture like Bernard Malamud. As it was, there was a pronounced tendency in the discussions to approach the problematical aspects of modern Jewish existence primarily in theological terms, but, interestingly, three of the most meaningful presentations turned out to be attempts, each conceived quite independently, to go beyond theologizing and speak about Jewish existence in a vocabulary that made sense for almost any kind of person who has chosen at this point in history to continue to be a Jew.

SINCE one of these papers has been made available, in somewhat different form, to readers of this journal, I would like to use it to illustrate this phenomenon of theology reaching out beyond the limitations of its own conceptual framework and its own assumptions of belief. The paper, by Emil L. Fackenheim, appeared in these pages as "Jewish Faith and the Holocaust: A Fragment."* It is revealing that Fackenheim should begin his essay by speaking of history, clearly indicating the three large historical vectors which together thrust the Jew today into a unique relation to history: "Within the past two

centuries, three events have shaken and are still shaking Jewish religious existence—the Emancipation and its after-effects, the Nazi Holocaust, and the rise of the first Jewish state in two thousand years—and of these, two have occurred in our own generation." This is aptly comprehensive, especially if one notes that the statement would be just as precise if the qualifier "religious" were dropped. There is something intransigent, ineluctable, about the way historical crisis surrounds the Jew, demands that he define himself in relation to it. If one thinks of Jewish intellectuals, it should be clear that these three looming events have as much direct bearing on figures like Hannah Arendt, Alfred Kazin, even Lionel Trilling, as they do on explicitly "Jewish" thinkers like Abraham Heschel, Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem. It is the nature of each of these events to be in its own way profoundly troubling. The Emancipation opened a whole new realm of inner as well as outer freedom, but precisely because of that fact, it was fraught with ambiguities, confusions, contradictions about the limits, values, goals, and rationale of Jewish existence. The Holocaust, as a revelation of ultimate evil scarred deep in the living flesh of the Jewish people, raises the most disturbing questions about all value and meaning, questions that have to be confronted but that must remain unanswerable. The creation of the State of Israel is of course the one event of the three that is suffused with hopefulness and positive achievement, but it, too, is not without its troubling aspects—because life in Israel poses some of the sharpest questions about continuity with the Jewish past or connection with the Diaspora, because Israel has been forced to maintain its existence in a painful and precarious state of siege, because the very emergence of a Jewish state depended in part upon the Holocaust.

Fackenheim's essay, of course, concentrates on the Holocaust and tries to make spiritual sense not out of the unintelligible event itself but out of our response to it as Jews. All of us, he argues, Zionists, Yiddishists, Jewish secularists and religionists of every variety, have made a meaningful, even portentous, choice by the determination to persist as Jews after Auschwitz. The vocabulary he uses to describe this choice is quasi-theological—he speaks of a "Voice from Auschwitz" to which Jews have responded—or, to put it another way, it is the language of a necessarily "fragmentary" theology used where an integral theology would not be appropriate even if it were possible. Undoubtedly, there are non-religious Jews who would feel a little uncomfortable with some of the terms of Fackenheim's argument, but the terms neither exclude them nor are meant to "pre-empt" them for a religious position they themselves would disavow: I suspect that the essential difference between Fackenheim and, say,

* August 1968.

George Steiner, on the basic question of deciding to continue as a Jew after Hitler is a difference of rhetoric and symbolic allusion, not of substance. Fackenheim's style, by the way, in this essay, seems to me itself an indication of the openness that was so clear in his presence at the Segals Centre and in the tenor of most of the discussion there. For he writes on this occasion with a simple eloquence I have not encountered elsewhere in his work. He is eloquent because, putting aside all vocabulary of profession, sect, or party, he speaks with intelligent feeling directly out of the fullness of his particular condition as a man to all other men who share the Jewish particularity of that general human condition.

I clearly do not mean to suggest that the group whose tone is so finely illustrated by Fackenheim's essay represents some sort of annual convening of the Thirty-Six Just Men. Intellectuals are more cantankerous than most people, and the sessions of the conference that I attended had more than a few moments of obtuseness, wrong-headedness, intellectual perversity, especially when some participants seized frankly non-theological statements and tried to wrench them back into the cunning conceptual vises and analytic engines of theology and philosophy. Nevertheless, the experience of the conference demonstrated, at least on a limited scale, that unity among Jews is not a theoretical goal to be realized through ecumenical programs but rather an existential fact, merely ignored, disguised, or hidden from consciousness by the partisan quality of Jewish public life.

BEING A JEW IS, I would contend, a condition that can very easily diminish one's humanity, or, on the contrary, enlarge it, at least give it a certain clarity of focus and breadth of historical perspective. Doctrinaire universalists are in the habit of speaking contemptuously of "tribalism," and it is hardly a secret that tribalism exists in some of its most offensive, myopic varieties among Jews. Universalism itself, however, seems to me a seductively neat and unreal antithesis to tribalism, for mankind is as far away as ever from recognizing the idea of a human being in the abstract—all the observable human beings with whom we live come equipped with social, cultural, national, ethnic, modifiers. The

question, then, is not how to transcend one's group of origin but how to belong to it in a way that will extend one's moral and intellectual involvement in the larger life of mankind. In this regard, negative prescriptions are easier to offer than positive ones. I suspect that there is a close relationship between tribalism and factionalism, at least among Jews. A Jew who conceives his identity in terms of a cosy sense of belonging to his immediately surrounding group, and in terms of an allegiance to the positions and persons of a familiar institutional bureaucracy, in effect cripples his own imagination both of other kinds of Jews and of other kinds of men. The universalist who denies part of himself by denying any special connection with his own antecedents would seem to me to be at bottom an inverted tribalist: like the doctor in *The Brothers Karamazov*, he may find it possible to love the idea of humanity while loathing most of the actual human beings with whom he comes in contact.

By contrast, any Jew who achieves some sense of solidarity with the Jewish people as a whole has begun an exercise in the moral imagination of humanity by first identifying with this particular part of it, which remains so stubborn, recalcitrant, contrary, and abrasive, in its improbable variety. (Needless to say, the same argument can be made for belonging to other groups, though perhaps the variety is more exasperatingly extreme among Jews.) If this particular segment of humanity has had any kind of observable "destiny," it has been to live at the terrible cutting-edge of history, to try to create and sustain there a truly civilized life. In the ominous encirclement of Arab armies and Russian weaponry, it is what Israeli society has had to do and must continue to do. It conceivably might be what American Jews will be called on to do in a different way, caught in this country between forces of reaction and anarchy which both threaten them directly and invite their complicity. This is surely a moment when the profound and necessarily vulnerable implication of the Jews as a people in history should be eloquently evident. One can only hope that those who are beginning to speak out of an intelligent awareness of this common condition are not solitary voices crying out in a wilderness of factions and petrified institutions.

Observations

The Big Money

John Thompson

HALF OF ALL AMERICANS die broke. Born with nothing, they accumulate nothing. They may have owned in their lives some clothing, a few pieces of furniture, and, on installment payments, a succession of used cars and television sets. Some have saved up enough for a funeral; but among this half of all of us none has to his name possessions all told worth more than \$3,500; and most have far less. The average wealth—for half of all adult Americans—is \$1,800.

Another 30 per cent of adult Americans may be worth altogether as much as \$20,000. Above these, there is the group that may have as much as \$60,000, the point at which the federal estate tax is invoked. The average worth of even this group is much lower than that. And already we have accounted for nearly all of us. Only 1.6 per cent of all adult Americans could cash in for over \$60,000.

And yet few of this 1.6 per cent could be called rich. Of the rich there are so few, in balance with all us others, that as a fraction of a fraction of a percentage they seem less than the merest dot of a decimal in a nest of zeros. Instead of percentages we must shift to actual numbers, even though the numbers are necessarily extrapolations from very obscure data. Nobody has to tell anybody else how much money he has. But it seems that away up nearly at the top of our so widely-based human pyramid we have perhaps 90,000 millionaires. Then, finally, above the mere millionaires and ordinary multi-millionaires, there are, like angels on the point of a pin, the truly rich. They possess from 75 millions to several billions of dollars. There are maybe forty-

two of them, maybe fifty, there is no way of knowing. Here, in this tiny ring, in a further closing of the magic circle, the names recur in family groups, among them the great familiar names, Rockefeller, Du Pont, Mellon, Ford, and so on. And even this is not the whole story. Because for them, their personal millions and their personal billions are only the small but powerful levers and fulcrums with which these truly rich exert, in effect, their ownership of, to state it simply, practically everything.

Most of us, then, have no property worth speaking of. Nor do we often speak much about all the property these others have. It appears both outrageous and futile, more unthinkable even than the contemplation of vast megadeaths, to consider any kind of sharing out of our vast national wealth, as once we shared out the land when we seized the continent. As everyone says, the wealth would only find its way rapidly into a few hands again, as the land itself has done. Besides, reports Ferdinand Lundberg in the brief consideration he gives this wild notion in *The Rich and the Super Rich*,* it was estimated in 1953 that if all "asset-wealth" of the United States were to have been equally apportioned there might have been about \$10,000 for each adult; and if each of us had this sum invested at 5 per cent we would get only \$500 a year on it. (Both Lundberg and George G. Kirstein in another recent book about the rich† share a deep premise that, except for a few rare spirits, it is only the possession or lack of assets producing a good unearned income that marks the difference between master and slave.)

THOUGH WE NEED NOT OWN a thing at all to live in America, most of us need some kind of income, and almost every adult except those in public institutions has some kind of

income or is dependent on someone who has. (Even many of our old people have incomes. A man at 65 can now get a maximum of \$156 a month from Social Security, a woman as much as \$161.60 under certain conditions.) I suppose that most of us when we think about money think of income rather than assets. We may enjoy the notion that we "own" our homes, those tokens of the allegiance we regularly pay to the rich for being rich, just as our government pays them for being rich, in the form of the "national debt"; but as we see, not many of us can take our ownership seriously. We do take our incomes seriously, and we are once more being urged by a few people to take seriously the very low incomes so many Americans have. The division of our national income among us follows, of course, the general pattern of the division of our assets among us. But while we feel—I am supposing again—little more than a helpless awe at reports of how many millions of Americans live and die almost unencumbered by possessions, we may all of us be disconcerted when we are told that perhaps one in three of all our American families barely gets enough to live on. It is hard to be told this again, all these years after Franklin D. Roosevelt said that one-third of a nation was ill-served in the basic necessities of life. That was the Depression, when nobody could deny something serious was wrong with the national economy. But now the economy is booming. What is wrong?

About one-fifth of all American families—or "households" or "spending units"—live on incomes below the so-called federal "poverty line" of \$3,300 for a family of four; another 7 per cent, earning between \$3,300 and \$4,300 a year, are "near-poor." So reports the sociologist Herbert J. Gans in the *New York Times*, November 3, 1968. A study made at the University of Michigan reported that in 1962, 30 per cent of all American "spending units" had less than \$2,510 a year.

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* Lyle Stuart, 812 pp., \$12.50.

† *The Rich: Are They Different?* Houghton Mifflin, 257 pp., \$5.95.

It is hard to tell whether or not this means that things have improved. The statisticians, as I said, must extrapolate, and they use different bases. The United States Department of Commerce reported that as of 1964 about 20 per cent of families—they counted some 5 or 6 million fewer than the 54 million spending units of the University of Michigan study—had less than \$3,000 a year, and 35 per cent had less than \$5,000 a year. Perhaps we should say that about one in four Americans lives in or near poverty.

One study shows 80 per cent of all families with less than \$10,000 a year, another shows about 70 per cent. In comparing the take of upper segments with that of the lower, some nice symmetries appear. The richest 5 per cent get 20 per cent of the national income; the poorest 20 per cent get 5 per cent of the income. On a larger scale, the poorest 30 per cent of Americans get about 10 per cent of the national income, and the upper 10 per cent about 30 per cent of it.

At the very top, there were among the angelic orders in 1961 some 398 individual incomes of over one million dollars. In 1963, in New York State, there were 73 incomes of one million or more. The greatest part of these large incomes derives, of course, from dividends and interest. And, contrary to popular belief about "90 per cent brackets" of federal income tax, those who receive very large incomes often pay at lower rates than the poor, and some pay no income taxes at all. In 1959, five persons with incomes of more than five million dollars apiece paid no federal tax. One with an income of twenty million paid no tax. In 1961, seventeen persons with incomes of one million or more and thirty-five others with incomes of five hundred thousand dollars or more paid, as Lundberg says, "no taxes whatever."

But at that level, income is not the same thing it is to us, any more than property is. To most of us, income is what we have to live on. To the rich, it is nothing of the sort. For them, receiving income is only one of the ways, and a rather minor one, of growing richer.

MOST OF US, THEN, don't own much and don't get much for our work.

Nearly all of us work for the rich, and they own practically everything and also get the lion's share of the national income. Most of them, moreover, have inherited their fortunes, and will leave these fortunes, much augmented by prosperity and scarcely scratched by taxation, to their heirs. The corporations that the rich control have the power to dominate all the important parts of the American economy, as far beyond our control as beyond the knowledge of most of us. America is not a land of equality, not even a land of equal opportunities. We are a nation of employees, entirely dependent upon the grace of our masters, who form a class, as Lundberg puts it, "comparable in relative size to the owning class of the Banana Republics." We have as little to say about the great decisions in our society as any peon in his, or for that matter as little as any citizen of the Soviet Union. Nor are we secure in our private lives: a few months of unemployment could wipe out almost any of us. And yet it seems fair to say that it does not seem that way at all.

We do not appear to mind the fact that the rich own so much, we do not appear to mind even the tremendous disparity of incomes in America. There is scarcely a political movement worth noticing that even draws attention to these disparities. Johnson's War on Poverty interested few people and seems to have served chiefly to provide "poverty money" in large amounts to those who know what to do with large amounts of money. We are content to have the poor among us even if they are one in four. Seven or eight out of every ten of us accept without fundamental question our annual incomes of less than \$10,000 for our households.

PERHAPS THIS IS enough for us. We all know pretty well what a family would get for about \$10,000, but it may be interesting to see it spelled out. The United States Department of Labor has recently declared that an urban family of four can achieve a "modest but adequate standard of living" on \$9,191 a year—about \$776 a month, \$177 a week. Of course this is far above the average American income; only about a quarter

of all families have so much, no matter how many in the family work.

But this is what you get for it. First, you get a deduction from your paycheck for Social Security, various state and local taxes, disability insurance, federal income tax, of \$114 a month, leaving you \$662 in take-home pay. You get "a five-room unfurnished unit in sound condition, with hot and cold running water, central or other installed heating, located with easy access to community facilities." You get this for \$105 a month! For another forty dollars a month, you keep your place furnished and keep the refrigerator and washer and vacuum cleaner and sewing machine and toaster running. Your wife feeds all of you on forty-one dollars a week, about \$179 a month; you can take them all out to dinner almost every month, and you can buy yourself one-and-a-half lunches a week at work. You buy a two-year-old car every four years and this costs you about seventy-two a month with gas and oil and everything. On clothing your family spends sixty-three dollars a month. Husband gets a year-round-weight suit every four years and a tropical-weight suit every twelve years, two work slacks and one pair of dress pants each, a jacket or sports coat every two years, one pair of street shoes every year, and one pair of work shoes every two years. Wife buys two dresses and two blouses every year, one sweater, one pair of slacks, and thirteen pairs of stockings. The kids get what kids need.

It costs about eighteen dollars a month to keep the family in haircuts, toothpaste, toilet paper, and so on, and wife can have a shampoo and set every three months.

You are supposed to have a group medical insurance policy, so this, and dental care, eyeglasses, pills, and whatnot costs you thirty-nine dollars a month.

On your church, Christmas, birthdays, and other generosityes you get rid of almost thirty-four dollars a month. But for some reason husband's life insurance premiums are also included in this same charitable thirty-four dollar item.

Things on the job like dues,

tools, and stuff, cost you six or seven dollars a month.

AND NOW, if you are not a homeowner, you have, according to my figures, \$115 left. If you're buying your home instead of renting, it costs you another fifty-three dollars; and then you still have left about sixty dollars. This is your leisure money. On it you get a newspaper every day, \$15.10 a year worth of magazines, \$18.75 worth of books. The kids can go to the movies once a month, husband and wife every three months. Schoolbooks, supplies, and tuition take sixty dollars a year out of this budgetary item. You get a new radio every three years and a new TV set every nine. Five phonograph records a year. Eight packs of cigarettes and "one and one-half cigars" a week. You have now spent all your pay. You have saved nothing. If the kids want to go to college, they can share that sixty dollars a year set aside for schoolbooks, supplies, and tuition. Nobody has said anything about a vacation. You are leading a modest but adequate life on your \$9,191. If you don't like it, "A six-pack of beer," the Department of Labor says, "can be bought twice a month."

Chilling, no doubt, like all family budgets; as cold and summary as a tombstone. Surely in real life as opposed to the blue-eyed home economics household of the Department of Labor, something would give in favor of a few more six-packs, probably medicine if the family were lucky, or food, books, the wife's forty dollars a month for furnishings and gadgets. Still, it is an adequate life, beyond three out of four Americans, and, of course, beyond the wildest dreams of almost everyone else on earth. This life, or the dream of it, is enough to keep Americans almost unanimously in favor of the system that gives many of them this much and gives so very much more to the rich. There is no move among us to plunder the Rockefellers.

We are content. Lundberg says this is because the really poor are too "stupefied" by their condition to look for anything better or even to complain, and the rest are brainwashed. In his leaden irony, "Americans, moderately content

(except for certain minority blocs in times of crisis), are almost to a man grateful for living in such a marvelous political and economic situation, extending liberty and justice to all—the last in part a reflex attitude to the propaganda that begins early in the public schools. Those rank-and-file Americans who do not feel grateful tend to feel guilty over their lack of gratitude for such a reputedly fine system." And again he tells us how 25 per cent of Americans live in poverty and near poverty, another 50 per cent can hardly be said to be living more than meagerly. "Touches of 'the affluent society' begin to be encountered only in the lower levels of the economically upper 25 per cent and do not amount to much until one gets into the upper 10 per cent of income receivers. . . ." Still, reiterated as these facts are, they not only fail to excite Americans, but I feel sure that to many of us, to those of us, say, who read this magazine, informed and sympathetic as we are, it is hard to believe that we are not absolutely surrounded by affluent people.

TO LIVE IN NEW YORK is of course a special fate and no doubt it distorts, among other things, my understanding of the messages my senses receive about how much money Americans seem to have. New York has in fact a much larger middle class than most American cities; we are not a pure dichotomy of rich and poor as myth would have it. Over 45 per cent of New York's families have incomes between \$8,000 and \$25,000 a year. And although, in Manhattan, \$25,000 would just about get the householder that bleak standard obtainable elsewhere on \$9,191, since his children would be in private school, he would pay four or five hundred dollars a month for "a unit in sound condition" on West End Avenue, and he would need six-packs of scotch not beer—still, it seems even more affluent than that. One reason our senses confuse the testimonies of statistics is our assiduous aping of the truly affluent; we try to dress like them—tropical weight suits indeed!—we manage on expense accounts or on splurges to eat and drink among them. And we circulate daily along the avenues

and alleys of their palaces of commerce and their cooperative palaces of residence, as we would not in most other towns have occasion to move so freely through their reserved areas. Only upon reflection does it really dawn on us that we are not truly among them. And then, there really are so many of them. Few in percentage points, yes; but 1.6 per cent of 100,000,000 is 1,600,000. That is a lot of adults with \$60,000 free and clear. And I wonder how many of them live on this island?

Sometimes I dream that from every factory chimney in America, from all the towns large and small, there is a drift that comes and in a fallout of steady cash strews itself on some appointed but departed heir, resident now on Park Avenue or on Fifth. Cooperative apartments require assets, not just income. You cannot get a mortgage to buy one as you can to buy a house. In my envious vision the fallout sifts through the thousands upon thousands of cooperative windows, into those rooms so different from ours. "The dimensions of a living room in a lower-middle-class home become in a rich man's house those of a dressing room, a mop room, or a linen closet. Rooms, properly speaking, in a rich man's house are generally at least four times larger than average residential rooms, sometimes ten or even twenty times larger. [Lundberg, who must sometimes share my invidious dreams, ends this sentence with a musing row of dots, thus. . . .] They are often of museum and ballroom caliber, as photographs show." And, as he reports, "luxurious to the nth degree." Yes, to enjoy this kind of space one must select his parents carefully whether for the good gilt-edged stuff itself or for the rare ability to climb that high and slippery pole.

Still, even knowing that we are not rich and never will be, that we will work all our lives for our masters, the rich, and have little to show for it, we do not turn on them. Ought we to declare a War on Wealth? I should hope not. Rather we might consider how blessed among the generations of men we have been, and how we may have still some time left to live in this blessedness. For the rich have treated us well.

GIVEN AN UNTOUCHED continent to plunder, first physically of its furs, forests, and minerals, and then given the even more fascinating industrial machine and the paper tokens these physical prizes could generate, the clever and energetic among us, and their heirs trained in the habit of command, have been diverted from their historic task. Their normal practice elsewhere and at all times has been the open and tireless mental, moral, and physical abuse of their less capable fellows.

As long as our rich are convinced that the only worthy end of human life is the accumulation of wampum, they will not bother to terrify and torture and murder us, to bend us to their least whim. Think how few of us in the world today are free of the unlimited brutality that is the normal mode of behavior for all human beings who can get away with it. We need think only of today, not of the endless slaughterhouse of history. Few people alive escape as we do: a few hundred millions in Western Europe, a few pockets here and there around the earth, and we happy two hundred millions in North America; we are all of them. Most of humanity knows perfectly well, as our blacks and our millions of truly poor know in their own way too, that power flows from the barrel of a gun. It is their daily experience. Not our defense of our "rights" set us free or keeps us free. It is simply that the clever and powerful among us are playing another game, and we should all be grateful beyond measure for this. We can go about our business, unpropertied, trying to get up the rent, and we may not succeed; but we are not lined up, and we can talk our heads off if we choose. (Lyndon Johnson was interested enough in money to make perhaps fifteen million dollars on his Congressional salary, and so, even though this was only his part-time effort, perhaps we should not blame him for the prosecution of those who have offended our warmakers. But Dean Rusk and the brothers Rostow and the brothers Bundy had interests other than money. Those are the men we have to fear: strong and clever and not sincerely interested in being rich. It was not the

rich who got us into Vietnam nor who keep us there.)

So instead of using their energy and intelligence to line us up for whipping, to force our obeisance to their superiority and to their creed as almost all other leaders of men have always done, our real leaders have been distracted for more than two hundred years in playing a game of their own. It is a game to which of course we must contribute but in which of supreme importance is the fact that nothing we do really affects the score. Within their own local enclaves, naturally, the rich may run a tight ship from stem to stern, like the Du Ponts in Delaware, but this has been only a form of their necessary household management. The rest of us don't matter. Only the game counts. The pure devotion it receives is attested to many times in George Kirstein's amiable little book, *The Rich*. "Making money is a game with me. In business, you don't get high grades the way you did in school. You don't score touchdowns. Winning the game is making money." "If I had twice as much money, I wouldn't change the way I live one bit. Right now I have all the money I will ever need or want. And I suppose my children may well eventually have too much for their own good. . . ."

This occupation of piling dollars upon dollars does not seem to be one which develops many of the qualities people have usually been persuaded to admire in their leaders. Neither the spiritual attributes of self-denial and general benevolence, nor the more aggressive virtues of courage, devotion to principle and to companions, of magnanimity or magnificence, of personal honor, none of these seems necessary or even useful to the rich. Indeed their constant search not only for sheer accumulation but for special privilege to aid in further accumulation by those already rich might seem to require the negation of a number of the qualities we have usually called noble. Many of the very largest corporations—more than half by one account—have been found repetitively guilty of restraining trade, of unfair labor practices, of misrepresentation in advertising, of making illegal rebates, and particularly of

price fixing. If criminal charges are sustained in these cases, it is considered good practice for the owners and highest officers to let their underlings accept the penalties.

So it would seem that if we know little about the lives of the rich, it may be because there is not much worth knowing. They are not attractive nor even particularly unattractive. Their way of life is of course indulgent but it deliberately lacks splendor, as it lacks even the more imaginative ranges of misbehavior, for which we must look to our hired entertainers. The rich bore us as much as we bore them. For this equation we should always remember to give thanks. It has been our safety and our refuge.

OF COURSE NO system is perfect, and it may develop that in their single-minded pursuit of their own paper fortunes at all costs to the rest of us, our leaders have for too long gone too far. Their unrestrained extractions have at last nearly used up our lands and our waters, and their game called "real estate" has let our cities decay at a rate nearly matching the "depreciation" rates which allow fortunes to be made over and over again on the same structure while millions of people lack adequate shelter. The rich may now have to complicate their game by introducing some new elements. But we should not rejoice when our rulers turn aside from their balance sheets and look out at the social and physical scene beyond their walls. When their free-for-all is over, they will begin to think about things other than money. They may well start to think about the way we live and how we talk and how we write. Other games, they may then realize, offer rewards as great as those of accumulation, and rewards more immediate, even intoxicating. Then, since they are only human, only clever and ambitious and energetic human beings, they will call upon the rest of us to fall in and line up on their new teams in their new games. With all they have at their command to arm us against one another and against the world, we may then form such battalions as have never been seen before.

Faith in Israel

Harold Fisch

IN *The End of the Jewish People?*, a book which appeared in 1967 and which was overtaken by the Six-Day War almost as it came off the press, Georges Friedmann, the French sociologist, wrote:

There is no Jewish nation. There is an Israeli nation. The state that came into existence as a result of Herzl's prophecies is not a "Jewish State." The Israeli state is creating an imperious national community that is conscious of itself, but does not include in that consciousness belonging to a Jewish people.

This statement was not true even when it was written. It overlooked the profoundly dialectical character of Israeli nationhood and the tensions that existed even then between the religious and the non-religious sectors of the population. For if religion is dead, you don't have to go out and fight it; if people are willing to place their bodies in front of the oncoming vehicles of Sabbath-breakers in the main streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, it is because the Sabbath is a central national issue for desecrators and consecrators alike. In fact, next to the problem of survival itself, the question of whether Israel is to be a secular or a religious state is the central issue of all. Nor did the war of 1967 divert interest from this issue: On the contrary, it gave it a new and more urgent dimension.

It is necessary here to make an important distinction between Israel and the Diaspora. In the Western Diaspora the problem of emancipation (or apostasy, if you view it from the Orthodox angle) has taken the form of a crisis of observance. At its center has been the question of *mitzvot*. The apostate Jew who opted out of Judaism (his type is to be found in the majority of the characters in Israel Zangwill's novels) did not, strictly speaking, abandon the

faith of his ancestors; what he abandoned was the intolerable burden of the commandments: the Sabbath, the embarrassments and barriers of the dietary code, the social limitations imposed by the ban on marriage outside the Jewish fold, etc. But the poignancy that invests both Zangwill and his fictional creations derives from the fact that the light of faith still burns, even for those who have cast off the commandments. For Disraeli, Esther Ansell, Daniel Hyams, and even Heinrich Heine and the rest of the emancipated children of the ghetto, the faith of the Jew is still intact.

The present crisis of Judaism in Israel, by contrast, is a crisis not of observance but of faith itself. In Israel it is almost more difficult to break the dietary code than to observe it. Those who want to eat bread on the Passover, or forbidden flesh the year 'round, have to travel far to find it. Where there is no public transport on the Sabbath it is practically speaking easier to sit quietly at home and meditate: There is certainly no possibility of opening shop, none of the fearful temptations which assailed the first generation of Americans when they had to decide whether to make their first Sabbath trip on the subway or to enroll in the downtown college which would give them education and security at the cost of an infinite series of infringements of the commandments. As for mixed marriage, with all its associated syndromes of forbidden glamor and buried loyalty (as in Zangwill's moving *Diary of a Meshumad*), it is far away from the average Israeli's experience. Even for those Israelis who have never stepped inside a synagogue and never will, there are few Gentile choices, so that marriage outside Judaism is practically speaking no problem at all. When it does happen, the rabbinate is almost indecently swift to convert and thus legitimate the non-Jewish spouse. When Judge Haim Cohen of the Israel Supreme Court wanted to marry a divorced woman, in contravention of the law in Leviticus 21:6, he had to go off to New York to do it. The resulting public outcry was of the kind that might greet a mem-

ber of the British royal family who had decided to marry in a registry office. It hardly sparked off a major controversy.

The fundamental issue was correctly highlighted in 1963 by a certain Ziva Gonen, member of a left-wing kibbutz, in a letter which she wrote to the Orthodox monthly *Bet Yaakov*, a letter very widely circulated and commented upon at the time. In it she appealed to the religious to show the non-religious how they might recover their lost faith. She was willing to accept the fact that the way of life of the religious had many advantages (among them the relatively low incidence of juvenile delinquency), but for her and her fellow members of the kibbutz to accept such a way of life involved overcoming the seemingly insuperable barrier of faithlessness. "How," she asked, "do you propose that the faithless should begin to believe?" Here is a new poignancy unknown to the characters of Zangwill or Abraham Cahan. And the poignancy of the question is deepened by a certain hopelessness. The fact is that neither *Bet Yaakov* nor those whom it represents have any answer for Ziva Gonen. Had she asked for the services of a rabbi or for the installation of a ritual bath, scores of willing citizens would have come forward, checkbooks in hand. But she asked for something which is harder to come by, and even those who have it do not have it in negotiable form.

IF THE REAL split is then on the question of faith, we may reasonably ask (leaving aside tricky theological issues which have never bothered Judaism overmuch), what is so difficult about acquiring faith? True, in the East and West it is in short supply, but in Israel it is a more everyday commodity. The founders of Petah Tikveh ninety years ago were not alone in having the kind of faith that moves mountains (or malarial swamps, to be precise); every Israeli child brings with him into the world as self-evident truth the proposition that the Jewish people is going to make it—notwithstanding demography, the atom bomb, the Algerian hordes, and

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the universal indifference of the ice age. Miracles are the Israeli's daily bread; without them he is lost.

Here, then, if anywhere, is the rich soil of faith, and if one section of the community cannot succeed in reaching the other there must be some rather special reason for this breakdown of spiritual communication. That special reason, I believe, lies in the demonstrable fact that the bearers of the ancestral faith are seen by many Israelis to be imprisoned in the past. They are thought to represent, above all, tradition, history, the pre-State inheritance. The Orthodox Jew, however modern his dress, however obvious his involvement in all the enterprises of a modern state, including army, agriculture, and science, is seen through a glass darkly. The spiritual eye invests him in the dark *kapota*, the fur *kaftan*, or the bright robes of the *mellah*. This is a great obstacle in the path of mutual understanding.

It must be understood that the attitude of the secular Jew in Israel to the past is basically traumatic. On the one hand he is passionately interested in archaeology (kibbutzniks who belong to the left-wing *Hashomer Hatzair* movement rejoice if in plowing they turn up the mosaic pavement of an ancient synagogue); but on the other hand, anything that smacks to him of the burdens of the life of the ghetto is anathema. This was well expressed some years ago in a short story by Haim Hazaz entitled "The Sermon." In it he portrays a character who is possessed of the near-hysterical repulsion felt by the Israel-born youngster toward the tale of trial and suffering which is Jewish history. Obviously there is something in Jewish history that the young Israeli is afraid of, some burden of heredity that he wants to cast off. And this traumatic fear and hatred gets directed against the religious Jew whose way of life comes to symbolize the intolerable burden of the past.

It is surely evident to the outside observer that to live at ease in Zion must mean to live with both the past and the future, and yet that is just what the Israeli has

not been conditioned to do. The religious community is thought to have preempted the past, and the secular community, the future. The fact that this state of affairs is itself the product of an immense delusion does not diminish the agony of the situation, for the delusion holds both sides sufficiently in thrall to cause them to stand against one another in a posture of latent warfare.

IT IS HERE that we should locate the special *metaphysical* significance of the Six-Day War. The war did more than call into question the armistice lines set up in 1949 between the divided halves of Palestine; it also called into question the divisions between the two sections of the Israeli people. For in the course of the war it became quite clear to all that the connection between past and future was far more dialectical, far more intimate than had been supposed. The soldiers who jumped off the weapon-carriers at Jerusalem's Lions' Gate on June 7, 1967, were, of course, not in search of archaeology—it is doubtful whether anyone out of mere antiquarian interest could be persuaded to storm a walled city in a half-track—and yet when they reached the Western Wall what they found there and what they found in themselves was the Jewish past. Israelis who had never known they were Jews suddenly awoke to their inheritance.

The books do not tell us where we go from here, but on the other hand without the books there is no way of explaining how we got here in the first place. In a collection of taped conversations among soldiers from kibbutzim, which were recorded and printed shortly after the war, two things emerged: With an almost monotonous insistence, as though afraid of making too perilous a leap, the heroes of the secular tradition insisted that they were not religious, but they also insisted that they had suddenly realized that they were Jews:

No, I am not religious . . . but the Wall spoke to me. It is enough that I know it to be the "address" for us all . . . that when something hurts, when something

presses down on one, then it symbolizes everything, the lot.

When I heard about the conquest of Jerusalem on the transistor there was no one in my unit who didn't shed tears. Me too. Then I felt for the first time *not the Israeli side, but the Jewish side of the people.*

There was nothing religious about it. That's how it seems to me. When I try to explain it I can't give you a clear answer. But it seems to me that *the Old City was for us always a symbol of something unfinished. . . . I can't really tell you why, but I am quite clear in my mind that there was no religious significance in that moment.*

(My emphasis throughout—H.F.)

IT SHOULD BE NOTED that the very word for a religious person—*dati*—inevitably connotes in modern Hebrew a rootedness in the past, a refusal to address oneself to the future. That is why the secular youngsters who speak above are so afraid of the label. And yet their sense of newly felt wonder, of a newly acquired identity, threatens the careful semantic barriers which the secular have erected against the religion of their ancestors.

The dialogues were resumed a year after the war in a kibbutz of the *Hashomer Hatzair*; this time, the participants were even more outspoken, linking their newfound religious consciousness with the bankruptcy of their traditional Communist faith—a bankruptcy revealed to them fully by the 20th Party Congress:

The fact is that there is today a slow but uninterrupted return to tradition. . . .

You can call it reactionary, you can say it's no good, that it's medieval—but in my opinion it's a fact. . . .

We are now in a period of return to the tradition, toward the Jewish people and our connection with it. . . .

Another speaker was just as emphatic about the breakdown of her socialist faith but less optimistic about the possibility of a return to Judaism:

But we had one blow from the 20th Congress. It began then and

now it's complete. That was really a powerful blow which left us without a faith. And I don't believe that we can get back to a religious faith. We had the sort of rationalist education which makes it impossible for us to go back.

AVRAHAM SHAPIRA, the chief sponsor of these dialogues, is also the editor of a quarterly journal, *Shedemot*, issued by the Mapai-linked federation of kibbutzim. In a recent issue of this magazine, which places great stress on religious and spiritual themes in general, a Miss Devora Diamant describes her own spiritual regeneration and how it has driven her to take seriously the positive commandments specified in the Jewish tradition. Her pilgrim's progress is made the more interesting by the fact that it is discussed in the context of a critical symposium on T. S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday*. She shares with Eliot, she tells us, the experience of absolute despair from which her faith has sprung. But in her case, new-won faith has brought with it a sense of the positive values located within the world and in human society. Instead of desiring to lock herself in an isolated sainthood like Eliot, she feels called upon to exercise her powers in response to a God who calls her to intensified social activity and creativeness. There is a very basic Jewish discernment at work here.

Shapira himself is a follower of Martin Buber, not only in his emphasis on the social bond, but also in his belief that in dialogue true life contents are revealed. He quotes from Buber, "Dialogue opens up that which is not accessible by any other route." In the conversations which Shapira and his co-editors have recorded there is much sentimentality, self-flagellation, and even a touch of smugness (the kibbutznik is seen to be above the weaknesses of the common man who, in the aftermath of war, might be tempted to loot or to trample on the nursery gardens of Arab villages). But there is no doubt as to the moral earnestness of these young men and women who are trying to sort out their identity by means of dialogue.

NOT THE LEAST interesting of the conversations recorded are those between religious and secular youths. These have taken place in the religious settlement of Tirat Zevi (in the Beth Shean Valley) and in the Yeshivat Merkaz Harav, a talmudical academy founded by the great Zionist rabbi, Abraham Isaac Hacoheh Kook. What the youngsters on both sides discovered was that they have in common both their youth and their Jewishness. This may seem very simple, but it is also very revolutionary. The mere fact of a group of unbelievers from a kibbutz entering a Yeshiva to discuss the problems of life represents a step forward. And the fact that such dialogue is initiated from below, by the youngsters themselves, is significant too. There is here a certain side-stepping of the establishment. The religious youth have done well—done well in the army and in the pioneering settlements. They have also pioneered the return to the village of Hebron. The settlers there—products of the Rabbi Kook Yeshiva—were at first frowned upon by all official bodies, but are now treated with respect.

The restlessness of the youth in the religious camp is also marked. True, the past has fulfilled itself, but what now? On this score the religious establishment has been remarkably unforthcoming: no message, no word, not even a new prayer to catch the imagination of the people. In these circumstances, young people have tended to take things into their own hands. Defying the rabbinical ban on worship on the Temple Mount, a group of young people, led by a student from the religious Bar-Ilan University, has several times invaded the Temple precinct in an attempt to hold services in the open. The young people are seeking an order *nisi* from the Supreme Court which will call upon the Minister of Police to show cause why they may not worship in a Jewish holy place. Again, in June of last year, on the first anniversary of the conquest of Jerusalem, some fifty thousand religious youngsters defied the official leadership and stormed into the old and new cities to hold a mass

thanksgiving. And in the recent internal elections of the National Religious party held in October 1968, the youth faction gained three times as many convention seats as in 1964. They can now rock the boat very appreciably.

SO MUCH for political symptoms, of which there will be more to come before the next national election in October 1969. My present concern is with the deeper stirrings of the heart, and here one meets with such a personality as Colonel Mordecai Bar-On, now head of the Youth and Halutz Division of the Jewish Agency, but until very recently senior education officer for the Israel Defense Forces. Colonel Bar-On's religious awakening began twenty years ago, during the War of Liberation, when he found himself at the head of an infantry platoon in a hopeless position facing an Egyptian armored column. It was then, as he has narrated with an almost childlike candor in the quarterly journal *Petahim*, that he felt an irresistible desire to pray, but owing to a secular upbringing he simply did not know how. His search brought him through the Department of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University to the Western Wall in June 1967. And at that point he declared his entire conviction as to the religious momentousness of the event. He is now a committed Jew, though still with certain social embarrassments to contend with; the Army is not accustomed to religious colonels outside the chaplaincy, and it has even been whispered that this had something to do with his move to the Jewish Agency. But he will do a good job, for a man who can put his finger on the pulse of Jewish history at this hour may just catch the soul of the young.

The religious gropings I have been describing have not gone unnoticed by the cynics. Sylvia Keshet, a satirical columnist with a wicked pen, has remarked on the "flirtation with religion" which has now become fashionable. Where will it end, she wonders, when even a stout, solid colonel like Bar-On lets himself go in this unseemly way? It is altogether too trying when some of one's best

friends begin to sneak off to the synagogue on holy days instead of going to the beach or listening to the radio like normal Israelis. More serious writers, like the veteran poet Natan Alterman, and the distinguished political journalist Eliezer Livneh (once a leading figure in the Mapai hierarchy) have spoken of the opportunities now available for a serious appraisal of Judaism as a living faith for the present generation. Livneh's own conversion was, as a matter of fact, well defined before 1967, but as with so many others his position has now become more emphatic. In the July 1967 issue of the literary journal *Moznayim* he published an article entitled, "The Hidden Face Breaks Forth." The reference is to Ezekiel 39:29, and also to Buber's concept of the eclipse of God. That eclipse, according to Livneh, came to an end in the wonder of the miraculous deliverance of June 1967; he ends his article with a prayer in which he bids the faithful and the unbelievers alike to join together in a blessing to the God of Israel.

Livneh's convictions have found expression also in the framework of the Land of Israel Movement, of which he is a leading member. The movement is a fairly loose political association of men and women from all parties who are determined simply that Israel shall not cede the territories won in the 1967 war. And yet the movement is also pervaded by an overarching sense of historical challenge and responsibility which with hardly any exaggeration could be called religious. Its manifesto speaks of the opportunities for both material and spiritual fulfillment offered by the return to the historic boundaries of the Land of Israel. Furthermore, it denies the right of any government of Israel to sell or give up the inalienable possession of the Jewish people. Here, perhaps without knowing it, secularists and one-time socialists have seized upon the horns of the altar of what can only be called a biblical faith.

It is significant in this regard that the Land of Israel Movement also includes an appreciable number of religious personalities. They are in the minority, but their very presence is important and much

valued by the secular majority. For this is possibly the first political movement in modern Jewish history in which differences between Right and Left, secular and religious, have faded away through the equalizing force of a newfound Jewish identity.

THERE is no denying the theological dimension of the events which have electrified Israel in the past eighteen months. For simple people the reaction takes a simple form; for more sophisticated people like Livneh and Bar-On, it takes a more subtle, intellectual form. But for all, it takes the form of a new uncertainty about old boundaries and old distinctions. All are constrained by the past; all are hurled forward into the future. In the last analysis, it has come to appear, to be a Jew is not so much to believe in certain things, but to be in a certain existential situation: The Jew is that person who is caught in the grip of Jewish history, with its unique traumas, its dangers, and its glories. The religious Jew, in this perspective, is merely that Jew who acknowledges and accepts that situation as a charge.

Cynics will smile, and New Leftists will no doubt feel that such disclosures confirm their worst suspicions about the mood of Israel after the war. It all depends on whether one believes that the history of Israel is neutral history or the history of promise and fulfillment. If the latter view is taken, the growth of a new and hesitant religious consciousness among the people of Israel will seem what it has in fact been for many Israelis—a genuine experience of covenant.

Beyond New Leftism

Steven Kelman

AMERICAN STUDENTS created two momentous political events last year: the primary victory of Eugene McCarthy in New

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Hampshire, and the anti-war demonstrations in Chicago. Yet despite these two surges, the student movement, now almost a decade old, is in a state of internal disintegration and flux. This is true of both its moderate and militant wings. Indeed, the outward differences between the liberal students of the McCarthy crusade and those of the sds-style New Left have tended to obscure the fact that in both movements the causes of confusion are similar.

It is one sign of the disintegration of liberalism as an ideology on the campus today that campus liberals have virtually abandoned any attempt to offer an alternative political analysis to that of the New Left. What drove a young activist last year into sds rather than into the McCarthy movement was fundamentally a different perception of his role. Members of sds view themselves as part of the wretched of the earth, whereas Young Democrats see themselves as future directors of the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development. When asked to justify their membership in the Young Democrats rather than in sds, they will almost inevitably refer, not to any serious political differences, but to the possibility of being "more effective." Campus liberalism today is above all a movement for "respectable" students, future-oriented and careful about undertaking anything which might endanger their records or careers. Liberal college students could put out long hours and sleep on hard floors for "clean Gene," secure in the knowledge that they were signing their names to nothing that might eventually make its way to the FBI. In this respect the atmosphere of the early 1950's is still widely prevalent on campus.

Capitalizing on their opponents' weaknesses, sds in turn constantly attacked the McCarthy movement last year for "working within the system" and for being simpleminded in its political analysis. In reply, the McCarthy people, instead of dissecting the terms foisted on them by sds, baldly answered back that they were proud to be working within the system.

Now, when sds members talk about "the system" they are refer-

ring to a political structure which they believe to be thoroughly undemocratic and elite-controlled. Thus, however much one may disagree with their premises about the nature of American society, the New Left's terrorist-confrontation approach at least has a certain primitive logical consistency, since by definition one cannot change a "totalitarian" system by any sort of democratic means. But when campus liberals adopt the sds term "the system," the expression emerges bastardized, if not unrecognizable. Far from being a focus for social criticism, it exists as a vague presence alternately to be paid allegiance to or turned away from. For sds "the system" simply is undemocratic; for liberals, America is democratic but its people, albeit democratically, are making the wrong decisions. The *Harvard Crimson*, for instance, reported last March that a volunteer at the end of the McCarthy campaign in New Hampshire had "lost his faith in the system." ("Losing one's faith" in something is the most frequent trauma of the liberal student activist.) Actually, he had lost his faith not in "the system" but in individual Americans, for it developed that he felt that the people he had come in contact with during the campaign were stupid. Such is the level of the crisis of campus liberalism.

LACKING STRONG intellectual moorings, the liberal, hesitant about committing himself to Marxism-Leninism, which is both dogmatic and a danger to his future, and yet continually frustrated by the difficulties of producing the changes in policies that he wants—especially an end to the war in Vietnam—is reduced to a proud fuzziness. In this state he is susceptible to the tactics and the ideology both of the Right and of the extreme Left. The most convincing argument which impels some liberal activists into radical movements like The Resistance goes something like: "We wrote letters, we marched, we petitioned, we worked for McCarthy. But the war still went on." I have heard this argument put forth literally tens of times, and *never* heard a liberal

respond: "But did we ever convince a majority of Americans that our views are right?" The system in which these liberals so easily lose faith is democracy itself.*

Both campus liberalism and sds-style radicalism today draw on similar social currents and intellectual modes in the university. Today's generation of student political activists, both liberals and radicals, has grown up in a climate of unprecedented social and political isolation from the American people. Radicals in the 30's usually came from families suffering directly from the same Depression which affected most other Americans. Thus the imperative, for example, to participate in trade-union organizing came not only from the Marxist liturgy but also from the facts of life. By contrast, the affluent middle-class position of most activists today has led to a merger of traditional middle-class prejudices against the "boobocracy" with the more sophisticated political notions of the elitist wing of the intellectual Left. While activist students lose their optimistic faith in American society as they grow up, they retain their hostility toward most non-middle-class whites. A sign, reading simply "Dumb Power," held by a heckler at a Wallace rally in Boston, indicates well the component of snobism in student political consciousness. This was expressed in civil-rights activism in the South and in protests against the war in Vietnam, the two great

student causes of the 60's, both of which offered the opportunity to compare one's beliefs favorably with those of ignorant rednecks or longshoremen.

SUCH ATTITUDES toward "the people" are bound to produce a very insecure belief in democracy and democratic social change. The young may hold on to the ideology of democracy longer than they hold on to their faith in the American political system, but an intellectual faith in democracy cannot survive forever in the face of a gut feeling that the people are consistently wrong.

Members of sds extricate themselves from this dilemma by developing an alternative ideology. They postulate, paying the debt to their childhood, the fundamental goodness of people. In fact, they argue that if the people are informed of the facts, they will *always* make the decisions that sds thinks they should make. If they appear never to make the right judgments, it must be because of manipulation and "false consciousness." To sds, there can never be legitimate disagreements, only different levels of consciousness. In the short run, before the destruction of the system which fosters false consciousness, one need not be concerned about "bourgeois democratic" methods or "bourgeois civil liberties." (That sds has resurrected these hoary terms is but another indication that, today, there is little "new" about the "New" Left.)

The liberal activist, however, unable to relate to any other forces in the society (except, perhaps, as a nostalgic nod to yesteryear, the Negroes) adopts the 1960's variant of the Puritan ethic, according to which political success is a function, not of winning mass support, but of hard work and "commitment." It was this doctrine which led to the massive outpouring of effort into the McCarthy campaign.

The elitist "liberalism" that often lurked under the innocent facade of some of McCarthy's followers—the converse of the elitist "radicalism" which dominates sds—descends from the opportunistic

* To be sure, some campus liberal activists developed their own stab-in-the-back legend—that the nomination was stolen from McCarthy despite the overwhelming popular support for his position. But the polls show that a majority of rank-and-file Democrats supported Humphrey. The primaries which McCarthy occasionally won attracted disproportionately upper-income voters—McCarthy's strongest voting bloc. Of McCarthy supporters, according to an election-eve CBS poll, 20 per cent were planning to vote for Wallace and 31 per cent were planning to vote for Nixon, which indicates that their anti-Johnson feelings hardly stemmed from a progressive direction. It is, however, through this disingenuous legend that some managed to reconcile their otherwise contemptuous attitudes toward the "masses" with their traditional belief in democracy. Many McCarthy supporters, to their credit, resisted this theory.

liberalism of the 1950's. If one believes, with the new liberals, that the mass of the American people are inherently conservative, ignorant, and mesmerized by an alleged private affluence, one looks to the educated or to those, like the blacks, whose minority status has given them a unique existential experience, as the only agents for social change.

If, on the other hand, like SDS, one rejects the possibility of change coming from within American society, one turns romantically to Ho, Che, and the peasant masses of the Third World. It was just such a denial of the potential of an authentic, majoritarian movement of social change in America, a denial now shared by both groups of student elitists, that served as the intellectual pretext for so many ex-radicals and liberals to justify their participation in the "American celebration" during the Eisenhower years. It is all too possible that, if the war ends, the Nixon era may cause the elitism of the intelligentsia to show its other face—the self-satisfied and often conservative meliorism of the 1950's.

THE SIMPLE FACT for those concerned about social progress is that liberalism is in serious intellectual crisis, and this intellectual crisis relates directly to its political crisis. One can only hope for—and work toward—the development of a trend within the student movement that will reject the middle-class snobbery which has separated intellectual protests from the mundane and often inarticulate desires for change that are a part of the feelings of a majority of the American people. A principled commitment and willingness to defend democracy is viable in the long run only if combined with a political strategy that has realistic chances of obtaining majority support for the types of programs one wants. It is precisely the lack of such a strategy for gaining a democratic majority which has made sincere campus liberal activists so unfortunately subject to influence from elitism and anti-democratic New Left conceptions. The present contemptuous dismissal of the

trade-union movement, a force without which any progressive majority is simply numerically impossible, is a good example of this loss of perspective.

One need not believe—as I do—that the labor movement is the major mass force for social progress in our society to recognize that during the past decade American Left intellectuals, following the lead of some of the most conservative interests in America, have underestimated the role of the labor movement in social change. While foundation officials, clergymen, and even businessmen are viewed as capable of being won to the cause through moral and intellectual appeals, trade-union officials are viewed as "fat cats" with vested interests and ingrained conservative prejudices. This view has allowed Nelson Rockefeller to appear as a spokesman for the "new politics," while making George Meany a leading symbol of reaction. But more importantly, it has led to a dismissal of any thoughtful discussion of the basic economic structure of the country as an obsolete vestige of the 30's. Unable to cope with the dichotomy of workers being left-wing on economic and social issues while less liberal on non-economic or foreign policy issues, many intellectuals dismiss them altogether.* When it was suggested to a leader of the Harvard Young Democrats who was active in the McCarthy campaign that the working class might be a fruitful ally in working for a more egalitarian society, he replied, quite sincerely, "Why do you pick the working class out of the clear blue sky? Why not housewives?"

* In this respect, Seymour Martin Lipset's seminal essay, "Working-Class Authoritarianism," has been widely misinterpreted by many elitist liberals, who view it as "proof" of the reactionary nature of the working class. Lipset in fact argues from statistical evidence that the fact that workers are more left-wing than the middle class on political issues relating to economic and social affairs, while less tolerant and more likely to be prejudiced, arises from the same cause—the workers' disadvantaged position in society. The task of democratic Left groups, Lipset argues, is to counter, through stronger economic and social programs, the conservative attempt to appeal to prejudice.

THE "NEW" student liberalism has accepted and propagated the opinion that union rank-and-file members are largely reactionaries and even "honkies." It has blamed rioting and crime in the Negro community on a generalized "white racism" or, more specifically, on the police, rather than on real-estate interests, low-wage employers, and political conservatives whose policies have been responsible for ghetto conditions in the first place. It permits those who went to high school in the suburbs or to prep school in New England to sneer "racist" at low-income urban whites who are rightly concerned with crime, living conditions, or keeping their jobs—and to cop out on the more difficult task of providing alternative answers to these problems from those presented by the Nixons and Wallaces. It leads student liberals frequently to make statements like, "The unions are the most reactionary force in this country," only to retreat embarrassedly when reminded of the role of corporate business.

If students who are drawn to the democratic framework still hope to accomplish anything of lasting value they will have to put forward not only alternative tactics to those of the New Left, but an alternative political philosophy and social morality as well. At present, however, the moral critique of the "new" student liberalism is radical, but its social analysis and political strategy are not.

Nevertheless, some significant beginnings have been made toward reestablishing a principled and intelligent democratic-Left current within the student movement. First, there are the youth workers from the Kennedy campaign—the insurgent movement within the Democratic party which had the most blue-collar and black support—who have formed the Kennedy Action Corps. Given the possibility of a 1972 Presidential bid by Edward Kennedy, this group may have something more than the memory of RFK to keep it alive. It could serve as a political bridge between the campuses and the "forgotten Americans."

Second, there is the New Democratic Coalition, an alliance of

some of the younger leaders of both the Kennedy and McCarthy campaigns, which could be another center for democratic radicalism. Here, too, much depends on the way in which the group resolves the different approaches to domestic politics reflected in its leadership. Its Executive Committee, for example, includes Michael Harrington, national chairman of the Socialist party, and David Hoeh, leader of the McCarthy New Hampshire delegation to the Democratic Convention and subsequently an unsuccessful Congressional candidate.

Harrington is a major proponent of the "coalition" strategy for social progress. He calls for an alliance of Negroes, labor, the poor, and middle-class liberals and democratic radicals to press for massive federal social spending, democratic planning, and a democratic foreign policy. Harrington is also one of the most effective proponents of the view that middle-class liberals and radicals must develop a creative relationship with organized labor.

Hoeh, while no doubt sharing many of Harrington's ultimate goals, has a fundamentally different view on how to achieve them. He too favors working within the Democratic party. But in an article in the *New Republic* last October he indicated that he placed fundamental reliance on the liberal middle class, and that he included in his "new coalition," without the mildest reservation, what he called "giant business." The only part of the working class honored with admission was what he referred to as "progressive labor."

Third, as a result of the current confusion among liberal students and the Marxist-Leninist dogmatism of the New Left, democratic socialism, which many older Americans may think of as only one of the more appealing leftist doctrines of a completely bygone era, is now undergoing a campus revival. While it is true that democratic socialist ideas have influenced several youth organizations, their main vehicle of expression has been the Young People's Socialist League, the youth affiliate

of the Socialist party of the late Norman Thomas. Three years ago YPSL was revived by a group of young people, many of whom were disaffected veterans of SDS. The mentors of YPSL have been Michael Harrington, Irving Howe, and other intellectuals grouped around the League for Industrial Democracy and *Dissent* magazine; trade unionists coming out of the socialist movement, among them Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers and Walter Reuther of the UAW; and civil-rights activists like A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Tom Kahn.

THE SOCIALISTS have not been caught in the bind of some moderate opponents of the New Left, who appear to be pleading for gradualism and compromise as the alternatives to enthusiasm and radical change. In the explosive atmosphere which exists on many American campuses, pleas for gradualism have become synonymous with defense of the status quo. This is not an entirely invalid view, for as Harrington argues in *Toward a Democratic Left*, the new technology has created social conditions which require that man must either master technology, or be mastered by it. To procrastinate is to lend oneself to the worst. The real question is not whether there will be change, but what character the change will take. Will it develop into new forms of oppression, or will it be democratic and creative?

The student democratic socialists acknowledge the necessity for radical change, but they insist that this change—as well as the society they want to develop—be democratic. Hence their opposition to SDS, and the very different tactics which they have adopted. Their activities are directed toward overcoming the hostilities that prevent various disadvantaged groups from uniting around common concerns so as to be able to build a majoritarian coalition that can rebuild the Democratic party; and toward defending the ideals of free discussion and democracy. The Harvard chapter of YPSL, for example, of which the present

author is a former chairman, has been involved in supporting striking Harvard printers and in organizing the boycott of California grapes in support of Cesar Chavez's farm workers' union. It issued a critique of "Economics 1," Harvard's largest course, which succeeded in bringing important changes to its reading list. Without sit-ins or confrontations, but merely by publicizing a document which even its opponents admitted was "well-researched and well-written," YPSL accomplished what no previous "student power" efforts for curriculum change ever had. On the issue of the status of military-training programs on campus, such as academic credit, YPSL called for a student referendum. SDS opposed the referendum, and demanded the unilateral right, through confrontation, to determine not only that ROTC be deprived of its special privileges, but furthermore, that it should be expelled from campus on the grounds that no student has the right to participate in it.

THE TURNING POINT for YPSL at Harvard was the sit-in staged by SDS's psychodrama politics at its presence of a recruiter from the Dow Chemical Company on campus. The Dow Affair represented SDS's psychodrama politics at its worst. Originally SDS had voted against a sit-in. But a small group of members decided to ignore the majority's decision, sat in, and demanded that the Dow recruiter sign a statement saying that Dow would never come back to Harvard. At that point, the mass of SDS members, ever willing to subordinate political judgment to the excitement of getting in on the action—and above all never willing to be "out-radicalized" by others—joined in.

The sit-in, coming at a time of heightened opposition to the war and widespread frustration (the Young Democrats had endorsed a "Dump Johnson" drive, but the McCarthy movement had not yet been launched), was an electrifying event on campus. But support for the sit-in was surprisingly low, and of those outside SDS who joined it, many later became guilt-

ridden and felt that, in a fit of emotion, they had let themselves be "had" into supporting a totalitarian position. Furthermore, and just as importantly, many students were annoyed by the abdication of student liberal leaders. The *Crimson* supported the sit-in, saying that Dow had no right to be on campus, and the Young Democrats, who were split, finally voted only a mild disapproval of the sit-in, after voting down a stronger condemnation.

At this point, YPSL, still relatively unknown on campus, came out with a statement and petition supporting "the rights of free speech and free recruitment on campus," and warning that on the precedent of SDS tactics, rightist students could also keep out those they disliked. At the same time the petition asked for clemency for the protestors and called upon the faculty to take a position on the war. University administrators, who were under great pressure from alumni and others to expel some of the leaders of the sit-in, based their case for leniency largely on this petition, which had over 1200 signatures. It was with this statement—which mixed a pro-civil liberties position with a strong anti-war stand—that YPSL established for itself an independent role on campus.

The modest successes of YPSL at Harvard and elsewhere indicate that there is an unexploited potential constituency on other campuses as well. Up to now, the mood has been set largely by SDS, whose politics offered an easy outlet for the alienated young in the form of such political gestures as yelling "pig," "liberating" a university building, or following Che's life style. Meanwhile, campus liberals, suspended uneasily between confrontations and careerism, have simply given up the fight. The lesson of the Dow Affair at Harvard seems to be that many students will seize upon a thoughtful alternative to the New Left's political actions once the opportunity is offered.

INDEED, DESPITE THE FACT that their posture is less frenetic—and therefore less appealing—than that

of New Leftists, democratic radicals may be heading for a brighter future than might at first glance appear. (It is interesting to note that at Harvard this year both SDS and campus liberalism are in a state of drastic decline, while YPSL is growing. SDS has been attracting about half the number of people to its meetings, as compared with the previous year, and the Young Democrats' membership is less than a third of what it was two years ago.) McCarthy's failure seems to have burned out many of the students who were all too briefly lit up by the message of his campaign. Many are reverting to "revolutionary pessimism"—radicalism about what needs to be done, but conservatism about the chances of accomplishing it. At the same time, SDS is threatened, not only by serious ideological divisions, especially with the Maoists, but, what is worse, by sociopaths like those who form the "Motherfucker" faction. This group has eliminated whatever political content might originally have existed in the New Left by denying the possibility of individual sanity in a corrupt society, and resorting to mental terrorism. "The future of our struggle is the future of crime in the streets," their leader has proclaimed. To protest the war, the "Motherfuckers" throw cow's blood and urine indiscriminately at passing cars. They disrupt SDS's own meetings, surely a case of the chickens coming home to roost. Those in the SDS leadership who are politically serious and committed, despair at the problem of such *enragés*. But, at least for the present, there is little they can do about it.

The experience of YPSL at Harvard indicates that the kind of approach offered by democratic socialists could find widespread acceptance among students who are capable of steering an intelligent course between protestors and politicians. This is the course that will have to be followed by any radical democratic movement that hopes to have a future in America, and those committed to building such a movement may yet find new and unexpected allies among the young.

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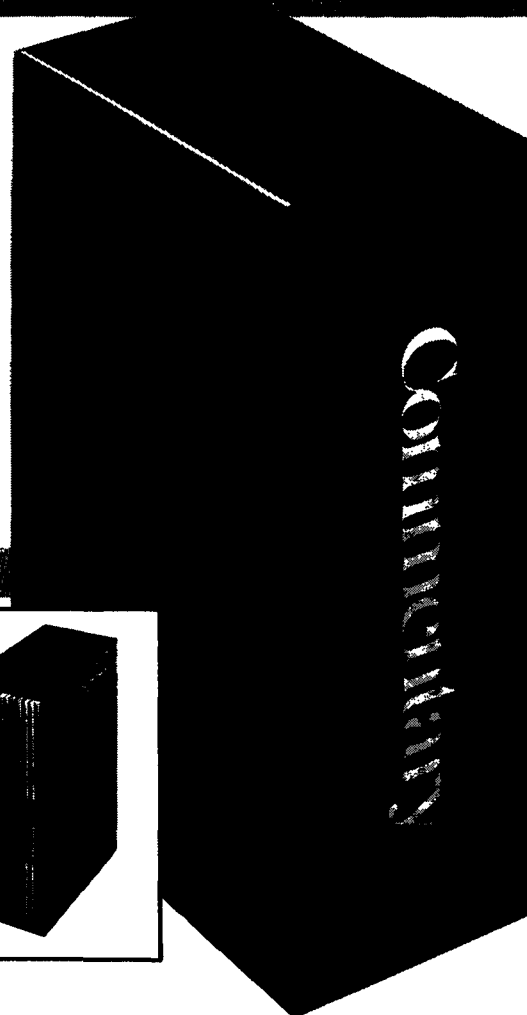
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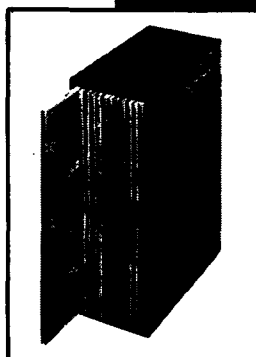
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Parting of the Ways

STEADY WORK: ESSAYS IN THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRATIC RADICALISM. By IRVING HOWE. *Harcourt, Brace & World*. 364 pp. \$6.95.

THOMAS HARDY. By IRVING HOWE. *Macmillan*. 206 pp. \$4.95.

Reviewed by RAYMOND WILLIAMS

WHEN THE NEW LEFT was just beginning in Britain, in the late 1950's, someone put me in touch with Irving Howe and we corresponded a little, keeping in contact intermittently over the years. I had hardly any other contact at that time with United States radicalism, and when I read the anthology, *Voices of Dissent*, I found some close correspondences in experience and commitment with the sense of our own movement. I said at the time (and it caused some momentary excitement) that there were sick voices among these dissenters, but all that I saw of Irving Howe's work made me feel close to him, in political thinking, in a way only otherwise available at that time in some of the new Polish writers and thinkers.

We have continued to exchange the occasional letter, and I was very glad to agree to review these two new books. They arrived last spring, and I began reading them with interest. Quite quickly, however, I could hardly bear to read them. Indeed, for almost the first time in a busy writing life, I defaulted on a review, and the books have been lying on my table like a reproach. I would still, in a way, prefer not to review them, for reasons I will explain. But I have tried to disentangle some of the reasons for this reluctance, and they may be of interest. For what has happened since I formed my first impression (at the distance of

RAYMOND WILLIAMS, here making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, is the author of, among other books, *Culture & Society, 1780-1950, and Border Country*.

the Atlantic), is the political experience of the 60's, and this is of more public importance than the ending of one of those loose international intellectual associations which play some necessary part in one's life.

I want first, though, to make my point about the Hardy book. For a variety of reasons, it is very much surer ground for me. It happened that I had finished both an essay on Hardy (perhaps published before this book was finished) and a section on Hardy in a long essay on English literature and rural society before this book arrived. Many of the essential political battles of the last fifteen years have, for me, been on cultural issues. Among them, especially, was an attack on the idea of an organic society of the pre-industrial past which drew its images from the English countryside and English country writing. This idea was used, of course, by conservatives, who hated both industrialism and democracy; but also by one kind of radical—in England mainly F.R. Leavis. At many different levels of criticism Leavis insisted on judgments of the "quality of life," through emphases of style and tone, in ways which indeed preserved a critical radicalism—the defense of values by the isolated mind—but in practice, in response to contemporary society, had little more to say than that it found both political institutions and political protest distasteful, common symptoms of the same disease. Leavis ended, in fact, by defending what seemed to me openly conservative positions, as in his opposition to the expansion of higher education; always with a point—in this case that much of the motive and content was utilitarian—but also with an acquiescence, perhaps involuntary, in the consequently preserved structures of society, against which, of course, an overall position had been presented. To be that kind of radical, against the society but also against the new forces seeking to alter it, express-

ing distaste for its orthodox symptoms but also for the manner of the revolt against it, seemed to me, after some years' experience, too easy. Always, it seemed to me, the core of the position was a body of literary values drawn from the past and generalized into an account of a pre-existing better society: the organic community; old rural England.

I RECALL this as background to my opening Howe's book on Hardy, who as it happens is a key instance for just this argument, since he wrote the real history, in the way a novelist does, and in any real view breaks the ratifying image. But on his first page Howe writes this, of the England of 1840 when Hardy was born:

England was then deep into the convulsive transformations of the Industrial Revolution; the reform movement known as Chartism was stirring many people and frightening many more; but in the Dorset countryside at the southwest corner of the island (Wessex, in the novels) one might almost have supposed that human existence was changeless, unaffected by history or technology, flowing through the centuries like a stately procession of verities and recurrences.

I have read this sort of thing many times before, and in most contexts it no longer surprises me. But this was from a socialist critic, and in either capacity was at this date shameful. What kind of cancellation of human experience is it to ignore the fact that six years before Hardy was born, in a village only five miles away, the best-known event of British 19th-century trade unionism had taken place: the trial and transportation of the Tolpuddle martyrs? This is the kind of event which everyone who has any serious involvement with that experience knows. But it is only one of many in the real history which makes Howe's account (with its literary protection, "one might almost have supposed")

deeply inadequate; its sentimental rhythms of the "stately procession," ominous.

I PUT THE BOOK DOWN and asked myself what had happened. Was this an American critic who had got the English experience wrong? Was it the sort of mistake I would have made if I had written that sort of book about Faulkner? Perhaps. It would certainly be easier if it were. But as I crossed over to the very different rhythms of the political essays in *Steady Work*, I felt, increasingly, that I was on familiar ground. Thus an essay attacking Isaac Deutscher on Pasternak, much of which seemed to me worth saying, ends with a couple of sentences that include the equally striking phrase: "If and when freedom is re-established in Russia." Note: re-established. I think I share most of Howe's views on the political character of Soviet society, but I do not know what freedom he looks back to, as something to be re-established, unless he is caught again in something very like his false view of 19th-century Dorset and is reconstructing a history from his reading of a literature. But then what stately procession of verities and recurrences could possibly pass through that pre-revolutionary tyranny, that post-revolutionary tyranny, that whole cruel and arbitrary history in and through which real social changes occurred?

This brings me to the several essays in which Howe attacks what he calls "Left authoritarianism," and the related essays in which he criticizes the New Left in the United States. It is not that I disagree with his most general proposition: that indefensible cruelties and suppressions have been and are being defended in the name of an idea of socialism. It is good and right that this should go on being said, in all circumstances. But all of us, of any generation, who are living through the present political crisis, have, if we are socialists, to do more than dissent from that kind of lying and apologetic. What we can certainly defend is a liberal idea of the truth and of human kindness, but it is the decisive experience of the last fifteen years that this, on its own, can insulate us from the very crisis in which we

are involved. This is, indeed, just that position of the radical critic, the dissenter, who is finally defending, not living people in history, but an idea in himself. The distinction is difficult but crucial. I have been forced to it, again and again, by the history of the 60's. There is enough false rhetoric as well as actual lying, enough casual violence as well as systematic cruelty, in almost every Left movement now active in the world to make any man want to withdraw from it. He can, after all, while telling the truth there, go on to tell the truth about the lying and cruelty of imperialism, of his own society, about its systematic violence and stupidity. His record is clear: he has denounced cruelty and lying whatever their source. It is how anyone would want to live, if he is a good man.

But is there anywhere, now, where such a man can live, defending this idea in himself and no more? This is the tragic weight of the experience that has come to us: that if we move at all we put at risk every value we know, since all the actual movements, all the actually liberating forces, are caught up in a world of reciprocal lying and violence, with no point of entry for any sustained action except in just these tragic terms. I do not mean at all that any of us should surrender to lying and violence; that fight matters inside the movements with which we have to associate ourselves. But we all know the structure of this experience in detail, from trying to live in truth and humanity in an exploiting society.

Every job we take, most of the money we earn, is in that sense an involvement with the indefensible; we say what we think of it, publicly or to each other in private, but to carry on life at all, let alone to do certain necessary and useful things—writing, teaching—we involve ourselves in structures that deny and violate our active beliefs. And except in a pretended neutrality—in Britain or the United States in one of the reserved occupations—there is nowhere to go, in any real action; even the form of the reservation, in our universities for example, is an aspect of the structures to which we are invol-

untarily committed. And if this is so, we ought, as socialists, to examine, with more generosity though with no less stringency than Howe has achieved, the unwished-for historical experience in which authentic revolution and authentic liberation have been involved with indefensible cruelties and wholly negative and destructive suppression and lying. To live this experience through, and to know that in every moment we are factually involved in it, is a harder life—I say simply that, *harder*—than the kind of analysis we apply to history already made, literature already written, when the position of the observer has been prepared for us in advance.

I FIND then that though I agree with much that Howe says about the past, and about current styles of glossing or lying about the past, I part company with him, wholly, in what seems to me the rancor of his response to the present. And not only the rancor: that can be understood, though not justified, in the sheer noise of contemporary political argument and action. It is more than that: it is a position of superiority—an unworked-for, unjustified superiority—in his critique of the young American Left. He and I have both worked hard; he would want that said, as he emphasizes in the title of his political book. But the superiority is unworked-for, and wholly unjustified. For we have *not* found a humane and active socialism; perhaps always humane enough, as we formed our ideas, but never active enough—we have only to look at our world.

I do not know at all closely the young American Left he criticizes. I have met some people over here, and it has usually been difficult. But difficult both ways; to see past the style, on which Howe puts so much negative emphasis, and into the situation in which we are all being tested: a crisis in which the idea is being made active through major historical difficulties. The relevant response seems not the cataloguing of faults, the references-back, the classification as if of types or specimens, but, in our failures and successes, a sharing of energy

and a rigor of critical reason which we have made substantial and available in a common action.

MY PROLONGED HESITATION in writing about these books can now perhaps be understood. For there is a sense in which I would expect Howe to agree with much that I have urged against him, in these terms, as a way of denying that it applies to his work, which he describes in his foreword in much the same adjectives. The critique, that is to say, is truly internal. From those active values he gets this actual body of work. But that is the trouble. For what I see in this steady work is not a sustained socialist or radical criticism of those elements of United States life and policy that are profoundly dangerous to the world and to its own people. Such criticism is occasionally present, but the dominant theme is something else: a sustained criticism of other people and other groups on the Left. There is very little constructive social criticism on the problems by which millions of people are constantly affected. There is not much destructive criticism of the directly cruel and powerful. And then the critique of others on the Left, which would be authentic and necessary as an aspect of these other kinds of work, comes through as something else, and steady is not the word I would use to describe it. The decisive structure is that of the critic whose idea of socialism is so strong in his own mind that he does not fully see the real world he is facing, but feels concerned and even threatened at that point where other versions or practices of socialism come too close or overlap. It is a common enough structure from the years of the cold war, and I know it, I think, in some detail from my own experience. But it is no longer, really, where we now have to live, unless we choose its mode, as distant as any imagined Dorset: its internal alignment on verities and recurrences.

I HAVE NOW lived twice through this kind of situation; that is what made me reluctant to criticize Howe. In 1940 I was trying to live as a pacifist and a socialist; that

idea, those contradictory ideas, were absolutely important. To go into the army and end up fighting SS tanks in the orchards of Normandy was a disintegration: wholly defensible, by abstract ideas—the fascist tanks had to be burned, the rocket sites flattened, the camps emptied of prisoners and refilled with SS officers; wholly vulnerable, by other abstract ideas—the cruelty and destruction beyond the call of duty, the involvement with patriotic lies and an authoritarian military structure. The disintegration of an arranged self was an unlooked-for history; would it not have been better to have spent the war making each position clear, and drawing lines between myself and unacceptable others? Yet it is how we learn, at any level that matters, and it has happened again, for me, in the 60's. On the one hand, the rhetoric of revolution, the vicarious violence, the covert authoritarianism, the crimes and stupidities of socialist and liberation movements; on the other hand, the fight for one's life, intellectually, in a Europe being taken over by the United States; the fight for one's people, dominated and impoverished by international capitalism; the fight for life at all, across seas and frontiers, by men so poor and so exposed that only one position is available to others—for them or against them.

IT IS AGAIN a disintegration, of ideas that had seemed settled, of a structure that had been long in the making, and hard with experience in every detail. Not transcendence, the easy word; but still not only disintegration: some new self, living beyond the map of the self; moving with unexpected people to unlooked-for places; looking back and seeing a once friendly man, not moving, ready to cut one down with a phrase. This is what made and makes me reluctant to criticize Howe: that I have stood where he stands, and think I know how it feels; that his arguments against movements now being made, on quite different bearings, are as familiar as yesterday, but are only yesterday; that it would be better, really, to say nothing, but just wave and turn away, across a growing distance.

The Remnant

POST MORTEM: THE JEWS IN GERMANY TODAY. By LEO KATCHER. Delacorte. 320 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by AMOS ELON

WHEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC of West Germany came into being, John J. McCloy, Military Governor and first High Commissioner of the fledgling democracy, admonished the German people that the world would judge the degree of their moral improvement by the manner in which they treated the Jews still resident in their country.

Germans ever since have taken this admonition seriously, if not to heart, certainly to mind. In West Germany today, anti-Semitism is a crime punishable by imprisonment; only a few months ago a man was sentenced in Berlin for telling a rather sick anti-Semitic joke. Leaders of the neo-Nazi NPD have for the most part been very careful to stay away from any hint of anti-Semitism, and have seized every opportunity to stress their opposition to racism. Even old Nazis, who still question the truth behind the "tendentious allegations" that six million Jews were exterminated in the camps, will usually admit that one of Hitler's "worst mistakes" was his treatment of the Jews.

In terms of law, the 40,000 Jews living in West Germany today are among the best protected in the world. Twenty years after its establishment, the Bonn republic still persists in its efforts to appear particularly considerate toward Jews. Jewish cultural endeavors, from encyclopedias and memorial exhibitions to research foundations and courses on the Talmud, are almost guaranteed some form of public aid, be it federal, state, or municipal. Government funds have helped to reconstruct dozens of great synagogues for nonexistent Jewish communities throughout Germany. (One of these palatial structures, erected in Bonn at

AMOS ELON, the well-known Israeli journalist, is the author of *Journey Through a Haunted Land, a study of present-day Germany*.

the entrance to West Germany's foreign ministry, is said to have caused one newly-appointed African ambassador to inquire whether Judaism was now the official religion of West Germany.) The federal republic has also paid huge sums in reparations to victims of Nazism and their heirs. Since so few Jews actually live in Germany, an anxious government has undertaken, by paying full travel expenses to Israel, to enable thousands of young people and students to view at close hand the former *Untermenschen*. In recent years there has sprung up a profusion of societies for Jewish-Christian cooperation; under the auspices of these societies annual brotherhood weeks—with special television and radio programs and solemn ceremonies at town hall—are celebrated in the major cities.

German literature of the post-war period, similarly, has been marked by a philo-Semitism that is often as obsessive as the anti-Semitism of former years. Indeed, until Günther Grass, a member of the younger, more relaxed generation, came out with the superb characterizations of Markus and Fajngold in *The Tin Drum*, German fiction was peopled with Jewish types invariably so good, so beautiful, and so virtuous that some readers might be led to wonder if Jews did not belong to an angelic order of being.

IF, THEN, THE EXTENT to which the Germans have changed were to be judged solely by their current attitude toward Jews, surely they would by now appear to have gained high marks. But although the attitude of Germans toward Jews will always be of great interest, it is necessarily only a part of the general picture. For in fact the Germans under Hitler were at odds not only—if most spectacularly—with the Jews, but with the entire human race. Now that the Jews are a completely marginal group in Germany, officially protected for a variety of reasons (public relations being one of them), it is perhaps more to the point to examine current German attitudes toward minorities in general, dissenters in politics and in intellectual life, or foreign workers

(there are over one million Italian, Greek, Spanish, Turkish, and other *Gastarbeiter* in West Germany today). From this point of view one would look for a change in the traditional authoritarian structures of German society, and a resolution of the age-old tension between unity and liberty which has plagued German nationalism ever since it sprang into birth in reaction to Napoleonic rule. The rejection of France and the Napoleonic Empire led, as Nietzsche saw clearly, to the "enmity of the Germans against the Enlightenment," with all its horrible consequences in the 20th century.

LEO KATCHER'S ASSIGNMENT in Germany was specifically to "find out what it is like to be a Jew today in what was Hitler's Germany." His answer is *Post Mortem: The Jews in Germany Today*. Few readers will be surprised by his main conclusion, that being a Jew in Germany today is a dismal affair. *Post Mortem* is a long, somewhat disjointed series of interviews and short portraits—a banker in Hamburg, scion of an old family of Imperial German financiers; a Polish-born taxi driver in Munich, survivor of Auschwitz; a former partisan in the Polish forests, now a movie mogul in West Berlin; an industrialist; a rabbi; a few Israeli repatriates. All evoke images of loneliness, irrevocable bitterness, frustration, and dismay. Some receive anonymous threatening phone calls at night. All of them, or almost all, regard themselves as Jews who are living in Germany, not as German Jews. Many have remained stateless, refusing German citizenship and preferring to travel on refugee passports issued under the auspices of a United Nations agency; others are German citizens, by birth or naturalization. But even these latter, as a rule, refuse to be conscripted into the German army; a special regulation, applied mostly with regard to Jews, permits such refusal without committing those exempted to another form of public service. Stateless or citizens, most Jews in Germany will tell an interviewer that for them, "home is Israel"; yet few, if any, have any practical intention of settling there.

TO BE HUMAN, one would think, is complex enough; how much more so to be a Jew living in Germany—resenting it, even hating it, but sticking to it, damning the Germans while choosing to live among them. The reasons of course are varied, intensely personal, and so complicated as to baffle not only the outsider but a good number of Germans as well. It is a pity that Leo Katcher either was in too great a hurry or tried to press too much material into this book. He writes with much compassion but less empathy; playing with fire, he seems to have escaped unscorched. His collection of two-dimensional portraits makes little attempt at psychological insight, rarely diving deeper than the surface, rarely trying to supply answers to the often appalling questions that it raises. Perhaps there are no answers. But there is a world of difference between what one expects from a newspaper article and what one expects from a specialized book, and this accumulation of short features fails to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon of the Jews in Germany.

Hijinks Journalism

THE PUMP HOUSE GANG. By TOM WOLFE. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 309 pp. \$5.95.

THE ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST. By TOM WOLFE. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 416 pp. \$5.95.

Reviewed by NEIL COMPTON

IF TOM WOLFE is to be believed, I journals like COMMENTARY are on the way out. The literary-intellectual mode that was first fashioned in the great politico-critical reviews of Regency England has become irrelevant. Soon, gentlemen-amateurs like Podhoretz, Lichtheim, or Alter will no longer be able "to pass judgment in a learned way" on books and politics. Moral protest will be out.

Like its predecessor, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*, *The Pump House Gang*

NEIL COMPTON, our regular television critic, teaches English at Sir George Williams University in Montreal.

is a collection of loosely related magazine pieces. The common theme is the decline of the old socio-cultural elites, and their replacement by an infinite variety of self-contained "statuspheres." Wolfe introduces us to a number of such private worlds on both sides of the Atlantic—including teen-age California surf cults ("The Pump House Gang"), British employees of American ad agency branches ("The Mid-Atlantic Man"), Hugh Hefner ("King of the Status Dropouts"), Carol Doda (the topless dancer with the silicone-inflated breasts), and Bob and Spike Scull (the brash pop-art collectors who have challenged the social hegemony of the New York art establishment).

Though all this is not so new as he would have us believe ("statuspheres" can be traced back to 18th-century London), Wolfe deserves our gratitude for bringing these introverted microcosms to life with such vividness and wit. His command of dramatic comedy is demonstrated by such episodes as Bob Scull ordering a hunting-pink sports jacket from a scandalized Savile Row tailor; or Marshall McLuhan telling a packagers' convention that "packages will be obsolete in a few years. People will want tactile experiences, they'll want to feel the product they're getting. . . ." Hefner's revolving, circular bed, with its TV camera constantly trained on it in case "something beautiful happens," certainly belongs in any social history of the 1960's. Wolfe has an instinctive feeling for the Byzantine complexities of status competition in metropolitan societies such as New York or London. His "New Book of Etiquette" ought to be handy for those who want to become upwardly mobile.

Wolfe accuses intellectuals and politicians today of exhibiting "a vast gummy nostalgia for the old restraints, the old limits, of the ancient ego-crusher: *Calamity*." They welcome "with a ghastly embrace" the agonies of riot, poverty, and war. "What are you talking about?" asked Wolfe at a gloomy Princeton symposium with Günter Grass, Allen Ginsberg, and Gregory Markopoulos. "We're in the middle of a . . . Happiness Explo-

sion!" He is the Hubert Humphrey of Pop. Bob Scull's favorite exhortation sums up his philosophy: *Enjoy!*

However, am I wrong to detect a note of panic in Scull's injunction? *The Pump House Gang* seems a sad sort of book, whether the author knows it or not. Most of its subjects are rather pathetic: the hair-obsessed Los Angeles teenagers endlessly cruising around the parking lot at Harvey's Drive-In; the La Jolla surfers, their intense but narrow pleasures doomed by inescapable adulthood; poor Carol Doda, paying for the present glory of "them" with perpetual inconvenience, and the prospect of a prematurely flaccid and sagging bustline; Hefner protesting that he lives a "damned full life" inside his aridly luxurious super-Playboy pad. The feeling that the alleged Happiness Explosion is little more than a series of unsatisfying pops is heightened by the fact that this breathlessly *Now* book, its publication mysteriously delayed for over a year, describes 1966 life styles—some of which seem already as quaint and remote as ancestral portraits.

TOM WOLFE PRACTICES the New Journalism—a mode of discourse which exploits the techniques of fiction in order to render fact more vividly. (Norman Mailer is the current master of this form.) Wolfe's standard device is indirect narration by a persona which, without quite ceasing to be the author himself, echoes the style, vocabulary, and values of his subjects. Everything depends upon getting the idiom right. Wolfe has a pretty good ear, but a steady read through *The Pump House Gang* reveals that he hasn't quite mastered all the scenes about which he writes so knowingly. His Londoners, New Yorkers, Ohioans, and Californians speak the same kind of Wolfese lingua franca: all of them—*buds* and *studs*—tend to be rank, freaking, raunchy and spastic, when they are not zonked or stoned out of their hulking gourds.

Wolfe is curious about his subjects, but has no real concern for them. They emerge as flat rather than round characters, each de-

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finer by one or two mannerisms. Hefner is always snapping upright and pulling "a great angular smile" while his cheekbones come out and his eyes turn on; McLuhan always pulls his chin down into his neck before pontificating; Robert Rauschenberg does nothing but ululate. The only three-dimensional figure is the author himself. We get a strong impression of him, with his hatred of literary intellectuals, his contempt for politics, his love of fashion and medical jargon, his outsider's obsession with inside stories, and his fetishistic lust for catalogues and minute descriptions. Above all, there is his horrified fascination with the sweating, excreting, decaying human body: topless waitresses' breasts dangling over the dinner plates in steamy restaurant kitchens, smelly armpits, old women with "veiny white ankles, which lead up like a cone to a fudge of edematous flesh," and old men adjusting "the aging waxy folds of their scrota"—these are the stuff of Tom Wolfe's bad dreams.

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test relates the saga of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters. If Wolfe is to be believed, the whole contemporary youth-hippie style—drugs, hair, beads, body paint, communal living, doing your thing, granny glasses, Day-Glo, psychedelic posters, stroboscopic lights, mixed media spectacles, and acid rock—derives from this bizarre community which flourished in California from 1964 to 1966. This book helped me to understand some of the more sinister and puzzling habits of my teen-aged daughters in 1968 (according to Kesey, the East is always two years behind the West). *Acid Test* certainly deserves at least a minor place in the literature of American self-exploration—a little below *On the Road* (whose hero Dean Moriarty, in real life Neal Cassady, was one of the Pranksters), though infinitely beneath *Moby Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

KESSEY BECAME INTERESTED in drugs when he served as a guinea pig in some of the early experiments with LSD and other psychedelic agents. After the publication in 1962 of his first novel, *One Flew*

Over the Cuckoo's Nest, this muscular comic-book hero of a man became the leader of an extraordinary little cult of grass-smoking, acid-dropping, young cop-outs from suburbia who symbolized their liberated identities by renaming one another (Zonker, Gretchen Fetchin, Stark Naked, etc.). At their La Honda retreat, they practiced what might be called the new primitivism—spartan living in a rural setting, but with loudspeakers and microphones in all the trees, the leaves painted with Day-Glo, beds in the branches, LSD in the chili, and rock-music blaring day and night.

The Pranksters' most spectacular exploit was their journey to New York in 1964 to celebrate the publication of Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*. They set out in an old school bus equipped with bunks, kitchen, refrigerator (containing LSD-spiked orange juice), and fitted out with thousands of dollars worth of electronic sound equipment. If Gogol's speeding troika was an apt symbol of 19th-century Russia, then this careering vehicle—crudely painted in psychedelic colors, with FURTHER misspelled on the destination panel—is a perfect image of the recklessly irrational element in contemporary youth culture. Zonked as they usually were on acid, speed, or grass, the Pranksters took care to preserve every insane or ecstatic moment for posterity: miles of tape and forty-five hours of slightly out-of-focus color film (which cost Kesey \$70,000 to buy and process) enabled Wolfe to reconstruct the whole chaotic trip. It all makes Jack Kerouac's 1957 idyl of life, *On the Road*, seem absurdly naive and respectable.

Wolfe extracts the maximum drama out of the Pranksters' encounters with the Esalen Institute, Timothy Leary's Millbrook community, the Unitarian-Universalist Church, the Vietnam Day demonstration at Berkeley, and the Hell's Angels. The high point of the Pranksters' activities came with the series of Trips Festivals which established the acid-rock movement, culminating in the Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test in Watts, on February 12, 1966, when the Kool-Aid was secretly laced with LSD,

and hundreds found themselves involuntarily turned on. By this time, Kesey himself was on the lam in Mexico, a celebrated fugitive from several charges involving marijuana. The last third of the book, describing Kesey's hallucination and attacks of paranoia in exile, his surrender to the U.S. authorities, and the Acid Graduation at which (for unexplained reasons) he renounced drugs, is inevitably anticlimactic after such visions of the way we (or our children) live now.

WOLFE MAY BE heartless and his prose style vicious (particularly in this book) but he is intelligent and perceptive. He detects the strain of authoritarianism and violence that lurks beneath Kesey's theoretically libertarian leadership (and is symbolized by the Pranksters' alliance with the fearsome Angels); and he draws some interesting parallels between this 20th-century community and primitive religious cults. However, he does not succeed in convincing us that the brief but hectic flourishing of the Merry Pranksters was part of any Happiness Explosion.

World Reformism

INTERVENTION AND REVOLUTION: AMERICA'S CONFRONTATION WITH INSURGENT MOVEMENTS AROUND THE WORLD. By RICHARD J. BARNET. *World*, 302 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by WILLIAM PFAFF

VIETNAM IS THE last intervention, Mr. Nixon tells us; there are to be no more Vietnams. The alternative seems to be Vietnam as the first counterintervention, the first Third World intervention in American affairs, instigating political insurrection. We insisted upon universalizing the significance of this foreign struggle, and so it happened: Our predictions were perversely fulfilled and the war transplanted into American society. The

WILLIAM PFAFF's books include *The Politics of Hysteria and Power and Impotence*, both collaborations with Edmund Stillman. Mr. Pfaff is with the Hudson Institute and writes a political column for *Commonweal*.

Nixon administration now must pacify this country as well as Vietnam; but Vietnam can be cut loose—abandoned, as will happen.

One must pause at prediction. Who would have said that the populist from Texas, after the 1964 election, would assume the task of world counterrevolution? Yet the Republican party record is, in its fashion, reassuring. When Mr. Eisenhower decided in 1953 that Iran's Premier Mossadeq had to be deposed, the American action was clandestine and expendable, and when it succeeded, the Shah's new government granted a major oil concession to American companies in what had been a zone of exclusive British oil interest. When the Eisenhower administration sponsored the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954 it was through the expendable agency of Guatemalan exiles—and success brought the return of expropriated lands to the United Fruit Company and abolition of a tax on the dividends of foreign investors. Neither we, nor the Iranians and Guatemalans, suffered any doubt about how anti-Communist governments proved their credentials.

So ignoble a business imperialism affronted the idealists of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Confronted with an insurrectionary crisis in Vietnam, where American investments were unimportant and Republican administrations had interested themselves but always shied off direct engagement, they plunged in. The cause was untainted by economic advantage, to put it mildly. The objective of American intervention was a grand one: to demonstrate that we could bring about a precedent-setting victory of liberal reform and counterinsurgency over radical revolution, discrediting terrorist "wars of national liberation." The Democrats believed that they could pacify Asia in our time, turning the Third World toward liberal government, pragmatic "nation-building."

THE VERY AMBITION, the implied historicism, of what they wanted made it impossible not only for them to win but impossible for them even to assess the American

predicament in Vietnam with realism. The particular case long since had been lost in the grand design. Mr. Eisenhower and his advisers had at least enjoyed a standard by which to calculate gains and losses. The Republicans also had demonstrated, in dealing with Eastern Europe in 1956, an ability to abandon rhetorical commitments without much compunction. In Vietnam, the Democrats were to commit an eventual half-million troops

to sustain a commitment which no one could quite prove ever had actually been made. And by 1968 such virtue was given its reward.

Or so it can be argued. One problem with Mr. Barnett's book is that he avoids the really interesting arguments. He is a politically sophisticated man, a founder and co-director of the Institute for Policy Studies, opposed to economic imperialism, Vietnam, *pax Americana*. He is alive to the popular



"Society needs more than anything else to be reminded that man is, in himself, ultimate value. Art, because it is the innate expression of man, speaks also in final values."—Ben Shahn

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anxieties and frustrations which sustain revolutionary action. But in this book he chooses not to attempt an explanation of why the United States has undertaken world counterrevolution, only taking note of the Marxist interpretation, the neo-imperialist and American messianism arguments, the case for the simple and expansive exuberance of great power. He deliberately describes only that it happened, not why. As a result, his account of the "National Security Managers" (as he calls them; he has inquired into the careers and origins of four hundred senior government officials of the 1945-1967 period) and their words and actions is useful yet includes very little that we do not already know. (His formal study of this official class, which offers to be a good deal more interesting, has not yet been published but is promised.)

Mr. Barnet denies that he is putting forward theory, and clearly means this volume to be a practical policy critique. Yet his case rests upon assumptions about contemporary politics and history which are not fundamentally different from those he attributes to the National Security Managers. There exists, he says, a world civil war between the rich and the poor, the well-governed and the oppressed. The National Security Managers, by treating the insurrections of the poor as a threat to world order and peace—conceived of as peace "indivisible"—and by identifying revolutionaries with (Communist) aggression, have made a bad situation worse and put the United States on the wrong side of this civil war.

While Mr. Barnet acknowledges the complexity and perversity of revolution, he still assumes that revolution today can adequately be considered in terms of aspirant democracy, a popular quest for the good life, popular resistance to backward elites and selfish oligarchs. His conclusion is that the United States must discover new political forms and examples which, conveyed to the Third World, will contribute to creating a situation in which "revolution will be unnecessary." Preliminary to this enterprise is the need to

halt great-power military interventions—so that the world is "made safe for revolution." We should propose to Russia and China that they give no arms to rebels. We will promise to give none to counterrevolutionaries. If a Third World government, facing rebellion, can get the UN to back it, then multilateral intervention—"truly arrived at by common deliberation"—can take place. But we must try to develop "a strategy for helping another society to remake its political life without injecting [our] own interests and values and without coming to dominate the weak."

How? Mr. Barnet's proposals amount to verbal solutions which exclude the problem. No doubt it would be fine for us to resolve this "world civil war" in a way which leaves America with clean hands and world-historical credit. But in justice to the National Security Managers it must be said that they did not wilfully choose war in Vietnam or repression in Guatemala or Greece. They made choices which implied further choices; they struggled against what seemed the bad course only to end up on a worse one. Their problem has been sentimentality of analysis, unanalyzed and sentimental assumptions about world order and the character of human politics. They wanted great goals, global solutions, indivisible peace. The bloody-mindedness of life, the incompatibility of other people's goals with our own, the terrible idealism and the nihilism of real people making real revolutions, engulfed them.

They should have done better; their intellectual and moral failure has made a sanguine crisis for the United States. But a sobering element in the situation is that their critics have too often been no better than they. What Mr. Barnet considers an alternative course amounts to a reformulation of the same world-reformist goals and an endorsement of the same superficial view of the sources of human conflict. Given such choices, it is hard not to prefer a neo-isolationism tempered by economic expedience, and this may be the decision the country has made.

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